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# LECTURES AND SERMONS

EMBRACING THE

SOVEREIGNTY, HOLINESS, WISDOM AND BENEVOLENCE OF GOD;

THE MORAL AGENCY OF MAN CONSIDERED

AS

SUBJECT TO AND CAPABLE OF MORAL GOVERNMENT,

ALL RECONCILED WITH

THE ENDLESS PUNISHMENT OF THE FINALLY IMPENITENT,  
THE FILIAL RELATIONSHIP OF THE BELIEVER  
TO GOD, THE FINAL STATE OF  
THE RIGHTEOUS,

AND

THE WORLD BY THE GOSPEL CONVERTED TO GOD.

BY

**Rev. F. G. BLACK,**

*Pastor of the First C. Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati.*

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

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1. The Sovereignty and Holiness of God, in view of the moral agency of man,..... 7
2. The Wisdom and Benevolence of God, in view of man as the creature of God, subject to and capable of moral government, and as a sinful creature, still subject to and capable of similar government,..... 56
3. The Sovereignty, Holiness, Wisdom, and Benevolence of God ; man's moral agency considered under the law and gospel, and the endless punishment of the finally impenitent ; all considered and reconciled,..... 99
4. The filial relationship between God and the true believer, considered and explained..... 149
5. The final state of the righteous considered,..... 169
6. The conversion of the world by means of the Gospel, 222



## PREFACE.

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THIS little work is sent forth by the author, hoping that it may contribute, at least in an humble way, to promote in the mind of the attentive reader, exalted and worthy apprehensions of the great and glorious God, as he goes forth in the Sovereignty of His Holiness, Wisdom, and Benevolence, ordering all His works and dispensations for the promotion of universal holiness and happiness. Moreover, it is the ardent desire of the author that he may have so presented the dignity and responsibility of man, as that every reader of this little volume may see and feel that he is held accountable to God for the formation of his own personal character, and that his eternal destination, under God, depends upon the part he performs in this vastly important matter. The author would urge every sinner, as there is efficacy in the Gospel to save

all, to seek at once the filial relationship to God contemplated by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and thus prepare for a life of holiness, and the saint's everlasting rest. Christian's are urged to a life of diligence, perseverance, and laborious effort, by appropriate motives drawn from various sources.

How far the author has done justice to the important subjects discussed in this work, will be determined by the impartial and candid reader. That it may contribute its mite to the glory of God and the eternal good of man, is the sincere prayer of the author.

F. G. BLACK.



# LECTURE I.

## THE SOVEREIGNTY AND HOLINESS OF GOD.

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“In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.” ISAIAH VI, 1.

THAT which the prophet here saw, is revealed to us, that we, exercising faith in it, may be led to behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.

1. In the vision you see the eternal God sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up, and in this, reference is had to his sovereign dominion.

2. The temple in this place denotes the church of God on earth, filled with the

manifestations of his resplendent glory, transforming in their nature.

3. The attendants about his throne, are the mighty angels, actively engaged in celebrating his glory.

4. Their song, and the comprehensive view they take of the glory of God, are particularly set forth in the passage.

The primary truth both of natural and revealed religion, is the being of a God. If there is such a being, he is the proper object of the reverence, adoration, thanksgiving, and confidence of his intelligent creatures, and of all the other exercises and duties comprehended in the notion of Religion. If, however, there be no such being, then, men have nothing to fear beyond the passing events of time, are subject to no law, save that of stern and blind necessity, and can rationally propose no higher end, during their fugitive existence, than to take care for themselves, and secure

their happiness by every expedient in their power. Virtue and vice are to them words without meaning, and the only foundation for a distinction in actions, is prudence, or a selfish regard to present interests, which are, of course, paramount to beings who know that they will soon cease to feel, think, and act.

The universe is not eternal and independent, but there is a Being distinct from it, who was anterior to it in his existence, as he is superior to it in the dignity of his character. He is absolutely Eternal, without the beginning of days or end of life. Moreover, he is separated from matter by the spirituality of His essence. Unlike the gods of the nations, He is not attached to any particular place, but exists in all places, as unlimited in essence as He is in duration. His infinite nature is the proper subject, if I may so say, of every great and good, every venerable and amiable quality

in the highest conceivable degree. Such is the God, whose character and doings we are about to examine.

In this lecture, I shall contemplate God, first as a Sovereign, uncontrolled, yet, controlling all the mighty events of this vast universe. When we contemplate God as a Sovereign, we contemplate His right of dominion as founded upon nature and grace, conducted by Providence and the influence of His Word and Spirit. It means that uncontrolled power which He exercised in the creation of all things, and His uncontrolled wisdom, power, and benevolence, shown in the great system of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, in providing it for, and offering it to man as He has, **FREELY.**

No dominion is so absolute as that which is founded upon creation. In this place, it is granted that God, as a Sovereign, in the great work of creation, had a right to make

whatever seemed good in His sight, and to make it just as His wisdom might dictate and His benevolence prompt. But I also affirm, that as a Sovereign, after making man as He did, subject to and capable of moral government, and placing all His interests in the hands of one man under the form of federal government, as a Sovereign, He had no right to damn him without giving him a fair and equitable test of personal agency in this state of things. In creation, God has shown most brilliantly His Sovereign power; He has made some parts of the creation mere inanimate matter, of grosser and more refined texture, and distinguished them by different qualities, but all inert and irrational. He has made others in an organized state, having animation and life, and to man He has superadded an immortal soul, endowed with reason, by which he is allied to a higher order of beings, and may hence be considered as



the uniting link between heaven and earth.

God, as a Sovereign, has a fixed plan of procedure, from which He will never vary. Sooner will He damn the whole race of man, than depart from the plan determined upon in His own infinite mind. As all will admit, it is necessary that God, as a Sovereign, should know all that He does or may do; but, it is not necessary that He should do all that He knows. I believe it is generally admitted, that the wisdom of God is infinite, therefore, He knows all things that He does himself, as also all that has been, or ever shall be done by His creatures. His plan of procedure is hence founded upon His wisdom, and not His wisdom upon His plan. The physical Omnipotence of God is as unbounded as is His nature; yet, no one supposes that the power of God has ever been exerted to its boundless extent, and that He has done

all that Omnipotence could do. But God's moral government over man, is not resolved into a question of physical omnipotence, and hence it does not require that such power shall be exerted directly upon man as a subject of moral government. In this case, the power of God is bounded by that plan which He has adopted for the proper regulation of the affairs of His moral government over man, as subject to and capable of such government.

You may contemplate God in all the perfections of His moral character, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, which, as a Sovereign, constitute the rule of His agency, and no one can form any reasonable objection to Him as such, since all His actions are bounded by this all-perfect rule. The great difficulty in our minds, when contemplating God as a Sovereign, is, that we are depraved guilty sinners, and the character of God is

pure and holy; hence, when we look at Him as a Sovereign, especially as He holds us accountable to Him for our conduct, we fear and tremble in view of approaching retribution. God is the Sovereign who has unbounded dominion over all things in heaven, earth, and hell.

We shall next consider the rectitude and holiness of the character of God, as a Sovereign.

In Scripture, holiness is often attributed to God; and there are some peculiarities attending it, which it will be proper in this place to consider. He is said to be glorious in holiness, as if this constituted the distinguishing excellence of His nature, and diffused a lustre over all His other perfections. He swears by His holiness, and thus holds it out as the inviolable pledge of the truthfulness of His promises. It is brought forward to enforce His commands, to guard His insti-

tutions against profanation and pollution, and to excite us to a watchful care over our thoughts, words, and actions. This perfection of the divine nature is impressed upon all His works and dispensations, which are thus rendered resplendent with the glory of the great God. This perfection was singled out by the angels of God, as the subject of praise when they appeared in vision to the prophet, as in the language of my text.

In Scripture, the terms holy and holiness bear a variety of senses, which I shall not now stop to consider. There is, however, one sense which it is necessary that I should consider, because it so frequently occurs. The term when applied to God, sometimes means august and venerable. This is the case in more passages than we are apt to imagine at first sight; it so signifies, in almost as many places as it signifies his absolute purity, which is the

idea commonly attached to it. When the Psalmist pronounces his name to be "holy and reverend," the second epithet is explanatory of the first; and when he says, "His holy arm hath gotten him the victory," there is no allusion to moral excellence, but to majestic power. The command to *sanctify* the Lord, is a command to treat Him with all that reverence which is due to His great name. It is so explained by the prophet, "Sanctify the Lord God of Hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." *Isa.* viii, 13. He is a Being distinguished from all others, by the transcendent excellence of His nature, possessed of every perfection, intellectual and moral, in the highest possible degree, and hence entitled to the adoration and most profound veneration of angels and men. His name should never be pronounced by any but with awe, and our whole conduct should testify that

we are deeply sensible of His presence at all times, and that of all things, we the most desire His favor and dread His displeasure.

While the holiness of God does at some times suggest the idea of greatness or majesty, which is an object of fear to a guilty man, more than love, yet, it does no less signify the purity and rectitude of God. This is its meaning in the following passage: "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, be ye holy, for I am holy."—1 *Pet.* i, 15–16. There would be no strength in the exhortation, if the holiness of God in this passage was something other and different from that required of us; the holiness of God is in this case referred to as the pattern of that holiness which we must possess to be happy, as also it is given as the reason why we should be holy. When we call

God holy, we mean to affirm His infinite perfection of character and nature; that He is perfectly free from the slightest pollution; that His will is always conformable to the rectitude of His own nature, so that impurity is the invariable object of His hatred, and purity of His approbation. We may hence define the holiness of God to be the perfection of His nature which determines Him to do, or will nothing that is not worthy of Himself, and to suffer nothing in His creatures which has not the same character; that is, He will either prevent it by His grace, or punish it by His immutable justice.

The holiness of God is commonly represented as a distinct perfection of His nature, such as is His wisdom, power, goodness, or truth. But I am of the opinion, that we should never take this view of the subject. We should consider



holiness as a complex term, which does not express a single perfection, but the general character of God as resulting from the whole of His moral perfections. The holiness of God, therefore, is not, nor can it be, something different from the transcendent excellence of His all glorious nature, but is the term by which we say at once all that can be said of the perfection of the divine nature and character. To call God holy, is to affirm that He renders to all His creatures their dues, and that He governs them by laws adapted to their natures and relations; that He is full of benevolence, and takes pleasure in rendering them happy, as they are all the subjects of His goodness; that He deals sincerely with them, and never amuses them with fallacious hopes, nor terrifies them with imaginary fears. As a just Being, He abhors fraud, robbery, oppression, every infraction of the rights of one



man by another, and every attempt to deprive him of his due. As a good Being, He abhors selfishness, hard-heartedness, malignity, cruelty, and all the thoughts, words, and deeds which are contrary to charity. As a Being of truth, He abhors falsehood, perjury, treachery, calumny, and in short, every species of deceit. As a Being of holiness, He loves every thing that is conformable to His law, and hates every thing that is contrary thereto. The nature of God is pure as is the light: "For God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all."—1 *John*, i, 5. Here you may see, as it were, the outlines of the eternal rectitude of the nature and character of our God. Holiness, as I have said, is the general name for the moral excellence of the divine nature; whatever, therefore, may be resolved into, or comprizes a constituent part of holiness, God loves and requires, and whatever is contrary thereto,

He hates and forbids. Holiness in angels and men is well pleasing to Him, for it is conformable to His nature; but He hates sin and wickedness, because, in His nature, there is an eternal repugnance thereto. But, how is the holiness of God manifested? The holiness of God is manifested in His works and dispensations, in nature and in grace. It was displayed in the formation of man. He was not only made a living soul and endowed with intellectual powers, but the image of his Maker was impressed likewise upon his nature, which consisted in the entire rectitude of his moral nature and character. The ray was as bright as the sun from which it emanated, and man when he came from the hand of his Creator, was resplendent with the reflection of His moral excellence. There was no weakness in his constitution, no irregular desire, no proneness to sin, but he was pure and holy in all his parts. His

appetites were not at war with reason, and struggling to free themselves from the restraints it imposed; there was no law in his mind to which all his internal and external movements were not conformable. "God made man upright." This was the state in which he found himself at his creation, and in this state he had the power to continue; for his moral power was sufficient to all the purposes of his moral relationship and responsibilities to God, and His moral government over him; for there was adaptation between his moral nature and the nature of the law by which he was to be governed.

It is true, he was liable to be tempted, but there was no principle within himself which could in any way co-operate with the temptation, and facilitate its success. God in making man, determined to make a being who should be possessed with the power of choice, and upon whose choice

should be suspended his present and everlasting happiness, or misery. The fall of man was not a part of His system, but one of those contingent events incidental to a system such as ours. God could not make a moral agent in a confirmed state; every such agent must have a state of trial, during which he performs a test act, and this must be performed without restraint or constraint, otherwise it cannot be a voluntary act—and if not voluntary, the agent is not, nor can he be held accountable for it, so that you can neither call it virtue nor vice in the agent. But the quality of the act is referable to the superinducing power, be that what it may. The fall of man, therefore, was not for the want of any thing that God ought to have done for him, but failed to do. He yielded to the solicitation not because his understanding was insufficient to detect the sophistry of his adversary, or because the sensitive part of

his nature was too strong for the rational. His compliance in either of these cases would have been necessary, and hence not culpable. He yielded, because he attended to the temptation alone, and disregarded the considerations which would have counteracted its influence; hence his fall was his voluntary act, for which God, as He justly may, holds him responsible. When we look at this subject as we should, we see that God is not indifferent about holiness or vice, and that neither has a preference in his mind. *No, no*; but, you see man at first created in the image of God—a manifest expression, this, of His attachment to holiness, and its necessity to man's present or eternal happiness

Let us now take a view of the law under which man was at first placed, and it will furnish us with an additional manifestation of the holiness of God. Its design was to keep man in a state of purity, by proposing

to him such considerations as were calculated to operate upon his rational nature. While it impressed him with a sense of duty, it stimulated him to obedience by the promise of reward, and opposed to the temptations with which he might be assailed, the dread of punishment. In placing man under a law thus strengthened by promises and threatenings, we see a proof both of the care God had, and still has, for man, and His sacred regard for holiness, the interests of which He took measures at this early period to promote. The law was communicated to man, and a sense of its authority impressed upon his heart in the first moment of his existence. God did not suffer him to live a day or an hour without a moral law, and the first exercise of his faculties was an act of obedience. The holiness of God appears not only in the general design of the law, but more especially in the nature of its precepts.



This law is a strict unvarying rule, enjoining every thing true, and just, and lovely, and of good report. Its tendency is to produce in us, according to our measure, the same moral excellence which is the glory of the great Creator. This law is an eternal, immutable, and absolute principle of moral government, binding all the subjects of God's moral government to holy obedience. They, not being now in a condition to render that obedience, does not alter the case in the least, if, when God at first placed them under the law they were adapted to the nature and claims of the same. Their want of such adaptation at present is the result of their voluntary actions; and hence the law is not weakened, nor its claims lessened by the fall, nor, yet by the provisions of the gospel. The law remains as it was, it is no less the duty of man to love, serve, and obey God now, than when first he was created. The

gospel provision is a system of grace designed to bring man back in his moral nature to the nature of the law, and once more prepare him to render obedience thereto in all its divine claims over him as the creature of God. To resurrect his fallen nature, and bring him back to the nature and likeness of the law of God, by the provisions of the gospel, is the only way to secure his happiness in time or in eternity. On the moral character of man, therefore, when thus elevated to the nature of the law, will shine most brilliantly the image of God. He who loves and obeys this law, is an imitator of God.

The purity of the law appears in its forbidding sin in all its modifications, in its most refined as well as in its grosser forms; the taint of the mind, as well as the pollution of the body; the secret approbation as well as the external act; the transient look of desire, the almost unperceived



irregular emotion. While it commands us to place a guard upon the avenues by which temptation might enter, it enjoins the strictest care over the heart, and calls upon us to destroy the seed before it has time to grow. The law is holy, and the commandment holy. Nothing less will satisfy a law of this character, than purity of heart and life. Our Saviour, as we have intimated above, came not to promulgate a new law, milder in its claims and more adapted to the infirmity of our fallen nature, but to defend and establish the original one in all its purity and claims, and set a pattern of perfect obedience thereto. In vain, therefore, do we wash the outside of the cup and platter, if the inside be full of corruption. The law of God informs us what He is, and what we ought to be that we may please Him. The statutes of the Lord are right; the commandment of the Lord is pure; the fear of the Lord is

clean; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; moreover, by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping them there is great reward. *Psalms* xix, 8, 11.

If we turn our attention to the dispensations of Providence, we shall see further proofs of the holiness of God in the providential government He exercises over men, especially over the righteous, the means which he takes to defend and protect them, and defend the purity and authority of His law. It may be remarked that amidst the WRECK of our nature in the fall, there remain some broken fragments of its former dignity; for conscience still continues to lift her voice in defence of the goodness and righteousness of the law, calls men to the performance of duty, and punishes their sin with remorse and fear. The operations of this faculty, both when it excites to the cultivation of holiness, and when it creates

remorse and fear for not heeding its suggestions, are strong proofs that man was originally created holy, and the power of reason shows that his nature was originally intelligent. I mention, in the next place, the means which have been employed to give more extensive and commanding authority to conscience. Such were the precepts of morality which were transmitted, from age to age, amongst almost all the tribes of men, by tradition, which thoughtful men in the heathen world discovered, and which, with all their imperfections, set bounds to the prevalence of vice, in some sort. I add further upon this subject, God, from time to time, raised up men among his favored people, who republished His broken and neglected law, in a manner fitted to arrest the attention of the most inconsiderate, denouncing his judgments upon the profane and wicked, and enforcing obedience by strong and urgent motives. It is of some

consequence in our observations to notice the strong checks which He has placed upon sin, and the encouragements he has held out to the practice of duty; for in these we clearly see His attachment to holiness. As He is the author of nature, of the human constitution, and of the world in which we live, in which chance has no place, we believe that he has and will continue to govern, in all the affairs of this great moral system, by means and instrumentalities adapted to the accomplishment of His mighty designs. Man cannot commit sin without experiencing pain and misery. Consequences of a very different nature result from the performance of duty. In what light shall we view this natural order of things, but as a declaration of the God of Nature, that virtue is pleasing and vice displeasing to Him; that he is the friend of holiness and the enemy of sin? We may collect his designs from His works,

as well as from Revelation, and whether we look at the one or the other, we are struck with the truth that holiness is the object of His approbation, for in all the dealings of His providence we see good connected with the practice of it, and evil with the practice of vice. Why should He so act if He were not pleased with the practice of the one, and displeased with the practice of the other? In a word, the dispensations in which His judgments have been revealed, are but so many manifestations of His holiness, and His infinite abhorrence of sin. Why has He acted as if His own works were an abomination to Him, and by one sweep of His almighty power, drifted them almost all into eternity? Why did He overwhelm the old world with a deluge? Why did He consume cities with fire and brimstone? Why has He called for famine, and pestilence, to sweep away

the human family by thousands? What means the heat of this great anger? Is it that God is delighted in the sufferings of His creatures? *No! NO!!* It is a vindication of His holiness; a demonstration of His eternal hatred to sin. The notion, therefore, entertained by some, that God is too good and holy to punish his feeble creature—man, is as false in fact as it is in theory. God has in this way vindicated His love of holiness from the creation until now, and it still remains true, that He is to the wicked as a consuming fire. It is, hence, a fearful thing for the wicked to fall into the hands of the living God.

The holiness of God shines with peculiar luster in the great economy of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. It has dispelled the dark cloud which sin had thrown over the character of God, and has revealed Him in all His



glory as the governor of the world. Let me here remind you, that one design of this dispensation was to show what man was in the original formation of his moral character, and what it must become in order to be acceptable to God, and derive permanent happiness from Him as the chief good. With this in view, He sent His own Son into the world, "in the likeness of sinful flesh," but without the slightest stain of depravity. Upon this man, the image of God—with which Adam was originally adorned—was fully and distinctly impressed, and in Him all the virtues that originally adorned human nature, shone most brilliantly; and hence, He is the great example unto which all good people are destined to be conformed. The holiness of God was displayed in the public approbation of our Saviour by a voice from the excellent glory proclaiming the Fa-

ther well pleased with Him; and this testimony was borne to Him because He was holy. But His death more particularly sets forth God's regard for holiness; the immediate design of which, was to make atonement for sin: the ultimate design, the sanctification of men; their restoration to that state of purity from which they had fallen. The means were of the most wonderful character: the substitution, obedience, and sufferings of a divine person—the Son of God—the crucifixion of the Lord of Glory; from these means we judge of the importance of the end. We infer that holiness is infinitely pleasing to Him, or He never would have resorted to this extraordinary method of discovering it to the universe, and re-establishing it in the world. “He gave himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous



of good works.”—*Tit.* ii, 14. In His death He satisfied justice, and so removed the legal objections to the sinner’s salvation, as that, God may now graciously exercise His almighty power in rectifying the disorders of our fallen nature, and restoring it to its primitive rectitude and beauty. I shall now trace a few of the consequences of the death of Christ. A new system is introduced; a new way of communication from the throne, to man, is opened; a new agent, the Holy Spirit, commences his operations upon the soul. It is that Spirit who moved originally upon the dark abyss, and impregnated it with life, performs the nobler work of regeneration; in which old things pass away and all things become new. What is the aim of His conviction for sin; of that light He pours into the mind; and His mysterious operations upon the thoughts,

volitions, and feelings; of the comforts with which He furnishes the believer; of his admonitions, counsels, and reproofs; of His excitements to prayer, vigilance, and activity—I ask, what is the meaning of all these varied influences, if it is not intended to produce, *at least*, a gradual assimilation to our MAKER; to refine us from moral pollution, that we may finally appear before Him without spot or wrinkle? All the holiness that is to be found in our degenerate world, proceeds from the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; for He is the regenerating Spirit, and is conducting His great work of purifying, and will continue until these words are fulfilled: “Nevertheless, we, according to the Scriptures, look for new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”—2 *Peter*, iii, 13. He will continue to exert His power until His work

is finished; and then all the blood redeemed ones will be fair as in Paradise, and their condition much more permanent, as their time of trial will have been ended, and they confirmed in Christ to eternal life; they will then be bright as the angels, and glorious even in the eyes of God himself. Redemption will terminate in the everlasting triumph of holiness. This is to be seen in the designs asserted in the judgment of the last great day. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, even them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.

As a proof of the holiness of God, He has made it an indispensable prere-

quisite to a state of happiness in His kingdom. The great system of God's grace through our Lord Jesus Christ, is designed, in its application to man, to purify his conscience from the guilt of sin; this it does when he believes with all the heart, in Christ, and by faith makes a personal appropriation of the grace of God to his heart: but the work of sanctification, progressive in its nature, must continue until the whole work of grace is completed in the entire purification of heart and life, which takes place just before death, when the entire will is swallowed up in the will of God, and the soul is fledged by His grace for its residence in the heavenly CANAAN, where God unveils His eternal glory to His redeemed and sanctified ones. The life of the Christian is acceptable to God, not because the law of God does not require a higher degree of

righteousness than he has rendered to it, but because he has, by faith, identified his character with the righteousness of Christ, and by so doing, the guilt, strength, and pollution of sin in him have been destroyed. The Christian's title to the favor of God, is founded upon his personal connection with the righteousness and blood-shedding death of Jesus Christ. But infinite as is His merit, and powerful as are His intercessions, they can not avail to any who do not, by faith, identify their soul's salvation with Christ, but continue obdurate in sin. Says Christ, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."—*John xv, 15.* The faith with which salvation is connected, is not a mere assent of the mind to the doctrines of religion, but it associates the heart with the understanding, and diffuses a living influence over the powers of the soul, and enlists

them all into the service of God. Such, also, is the influence exerted by hope; for, says the Apostle, "Every one that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Neither faith nor hope—such as I have attempted to describe—has any place in an unregenerate man: in all such, any imitation of the above graces, is deceit, a base counterfeit, with which those are amused who are attached to the pleasures of this world. The beatific vision is promised only to saints. "The pure in heart shall see God." In this world there is a mixture of moral good and evil; but in Heaven there is no such mixture, for the kingdom of darkness is separated therefrom by an impassable gulf. God's holiness will forever bar sin and pollution from this place of purity and consequent happiness. "There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither

whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."—*Rev.* xxi, 27. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, sorcerers, whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."—*Rev.* xxii, 14–15. The felicities of the inhabitants of this place will arise, in part, from their perfection of moral character, the order of their faculties, and their exercise upon the noblest subjects. There will be no promiscuous admission into that glorious place; but the society will be select; its members are fitted for their place and employ. When, therefore, the throne of God is surrounded by millions of angels, who kept their first estate, and of human beings who have been redeemed by the



precious blood of Jesus Christ, from their pollution, applied by the almighty operations of the Holy Spirit, He will once more rejoice in His works, and pronounce them **VERY GOOD**. In all I have yet said, you see the holiness of God set forth; whether you see Him in creation, in His law, in His work of providence, in the scheme of grace, or purifying the heart of man, and thus preparing him for his future state of glory. In all this, He shows and vindicates His character, and establishes the truth, that He hates and punishes sin, and loves and rewards holiness in earth and in Heaven. I have attempted to show in what sense God is holy, and have produced proofs that this excellence is justly attributed to Him. From this review, it appears, that He is the incomprehensible God whom we should love and adore. Lost as we are in the grandeur of His in-



finite greatness, we are constrained to adopt the language of Zophar, and say, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as Heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than Hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."—*Job xi, 7-9.* The existence of God we are able to demonstrate by arguments which carry full conviction to our minds; but the manner of his existence surpasses our conceptions. All creatures had a beginning; but as He always will be, so He always has been. What do we know of a past eternal duration? When we turn our thoughts to this subject, we are lost; we are overpowered with an effort to comprehend that which is absolutely incomprehensible. When we ask the question, What is God? we answer God is

a Spirit, Infinite, Eternal, and Unchangeable in His being; Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and Truth. But, after we have so answered, what do we know of God? He still remains the Incomprehensible I AM, that I AM.

The incomprehensibility of God, however, is no reason why we should desist our inquiries upon this subject, and turn our thoughts and attention to other subjects of far less importance to us in time and eternity. It surely would be extreme folly to say, we can not acquire perfect knowledge, and hence we will make no effort to attain it in any degree. Partial knowledge, such as we can obtain on this subject, is beyond doubt, better than total ignorance; for the knowledge that we may obtain on this subject, is, to us, of infinite consequence. The incomprehensibility of God should teach us humility, caution, and reverence. When in the

course of our contemplations, we arrive at a conclusion that astonishes us, we ought not, for this reason, to reject it as false, or inconsistent, unless we had found out the Almighty unto perfection. And when revelation informs us of some fact that reason never could have discovered, and by which it may be perplexed, we should not pronounce it impossible, or false. If we do, we know not what we say, nor whereof we affirm. All confess that we have not, neither can have any knowledge of the essence of God; all the knowledge, therefore, we have of Him, we gather from His works, as developments of what He is. Revelation is one of these works, in which we learn more of God than in all things else. Let us not, therefore, presume to measure the infinite God by our finite powers of reason. "Surely," said Auger, "I am more brutish than any man, and have not the

understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have the knowledge of the holy." Who hath ascended up into Heaven, or descended into Hell? Who hath gathered the winds in His fists? Who hath bound the waters in a garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what His Son's name, if thou canst tell."—*Prov. xxx, 2-4.* There is a vast difference between the knowledge of God in this life and that which will be enjoyed by the blood-redeemed in the life to come. Here, we see in part and know in part. There, we shall see as we are seen, and know as also we are known. But as our knowledge here should not be undervalued because it is imperfect, no more should our knowledge there be magnified beyond the reality. Some suppose our knowledge here, partial; that is, imperfect—which is certainly true; for

we only know in part, and are going on to know, hence our knowledge here is progressive; but they say that our knowledge in the future will be perfect, or comprehensive. I know it is said, that then, we shall see face to face, and know even as we are known; but from hence to infer that we shall know God as fully as He knows us, is to be misled by the sound of words, and not to attend to the restriction of the sense, as the subject necessarily requires. But, man in Heaven will be but man; and if so, his mind will still be finite, and so he can not yet comprehend the infinite God. I admit, he will more fully comprehend Him than he here can.

To comprehend God fully, man must become as God—infinite. I hence contend, that man's knowledge, even in Heaven, will be progressive. God will be eternally making developments of

himself to the ransomed millions who surround His throne, giving to them increased knowledge of His perfections and glory, and so eternally increasing their happiness. With this view before us, we come to this conclusion, that their blessedness will never reach a limit, beyond which there is nothing to be discovered; when ages upon ages have passed away, He will still remain the Incomprehensible and Eternal God.

From this view, it follows, that He is the all-sufficient and essentially perfect One. All-sufficient to himself and His creatures. As the author of all things, He could receive nothing from another (for there was no other), nor could He be limited by another (when there was no other.) Being infinite, He is possessed of all possible perfection. When He existed alone, He was all to himself. His love, His understanding, His ener-

gies found an adequate subject of contemplation and affection in himself. Had He stood in need of anything external, He could not have been the independent, all-sufficient God of eternity. He created all things, and it is said, He created them for himself; but it was not to supply any defect in himself by them; but that He might communicate life and happiness to angels and man, and admit them to the contemplation of His glory. He demands the services of His intelligent creatures whom He has endowed with powers which qualify them for the duties enjoined; but He derives no benefit from their good offices, and all the advantages redound to themselves. He expects His creatures to glorify Him; but, then, is He like a poor mortal, who lives upon the admiration and praise of his followers? The glory which He requires, is merely the devout



acknowledgment of the infinite excellence of which He was possessed before there was an eye to behold Him, or a mind to contemplate Him. He loves His creatures; but then, there is no mixture of selfishness in that love; He desires their happiness, but it is from benevolence, and not to add to His own. As an infinitely perfect Being, He has all His resources in himself. Creatures can give Him nothing, for all that they possess is already His; and they can take nothing from Him whose existence is necessary and immutable.

God is all-sufficient to His creatures; they live, move, and have their being in Him. His arm sustains, His goodness supplies, and His wisdom guides them. It is owing to His care that the great system of nature is supplied, and its laws continue to operate for the general good. All the happiness that is enjoyed by the

different families of His creatures, emanates from His ever flowing bounty. Happiness of the most ordinary character, such as is experienced through the senses, is the fruit of His beneficence, no less than that which is communicated through intellect and reason. He furnishes *all*, ALL the sources of happiness to His creatures, from the angel to the insect. All are by Him furnished with the means of happiness—not even the most inconsiderable insect is neglected or overlooked; neither is this bounty of His ever exhausted; it is continued from day to day, and from year to year. When one generation passes away and another comes forth, the store-house of His providence is as well supplied for them as it was for their predecessors.

The all-sufficiency of God ought now to be considered with special reference to man and the interests of his death-

less soul. It is true, the happiness of mind consists in the enjoyment of God. His favor is life, and His loving kindness is better than life; He is the portion of the soul: this intimates that the impressions of His love, the manifestations of His glory, are the chief objects of his desire, and the sources of its highest satisfaction; nothing below this can satisfy the aspirations of an immortal soul. He who is possessed of this portion, has found that good of which the wise men of ancient times dreamed and talked, but the nature of which they did not understand; that good which the soul of man was created to enjoy, and for which it feels a thirst that all the streams of nature can never satisfy; in God alone is that thirst assuaged; this is the good that comprehends all good, and with which, none may be compared; after enjoying which, none other will ever

be desired, and which will continue from age to age to impart joy ever full and ever new. So satisfied is He that He envies no man, however prosperous, because He knows no man who has such reason to be satisfied, but the man who has been equally prudent and wise in his choice. The Christian's inheritance is entire. "Thou, O Lord, shalt endure."

The all-sufficiency of God secures the undecaying felicity of the saints. An earthly portion is wasted by use, and many men who spend youth in abundance, in old age suffer in penury and want. Infinite perfection can not be exhausted. Giving doth not impoverish it, no more can withholding enrich it; it is an inexhaustible store. If it be true that the saints will not be stationary in their knowledge and happiness in the future world, it follows that their change

and progress will be from good to better, and better still; an expansion of their noble faculties, and a perpetual accession to their bliss. There is a fountain of living water in Heaven, because God is there in all the fullness of His love; a fountain that sends forth its streams of purity, unimpaired, and undecaying, to all eternity. What scenes of untold bliss will be enjoyed by those who, in this life, consecrated themselves to the service of that God who is ever pleased with the practice of holiness in His creatures. In the great day of eternity, God will vindicate His holiness, in showing favor to the good, and punishing the wicked with untold anguish. God save us from the latter, and give us part with the former.

## LECTURE II.

### THE WISDOM AND BENEVOLENCE OF GOD.

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“ Let us make man in our image, after our likeness ; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him ; male and female, created he them.”  
GENESIS i, 26-27.

THE great objects in the creation of man, I suppose to be, the glory of God and the happiness of man. The first is secured, if we consider the thing formed, MAN, the organical structure, the intellectual endowments, the moral sense, and the compound nature of soul and body,

so organized and arranged as to be one, and yet, not amalgamated, or in any wise mixed in their parts or properties. The second is secured, if we consider that moral perfection in which he was made—the image of God—the nearest resemblance to God of any creature on earth. Man is inspired with holiness of moral character, and invested with dominion over the other creatures. In this great charter, God has invested man with certain rights which are not to be disregarded even by the Great Creator himself, although He is a Sovereign; for this would be to do and undo; the work of folly, and not of wisdom.

Of this, I shall consider more fully hereafter.

Wisdom and knowledge are easily distinguished, the one from the other: knowledge is the comprehension of things as they are; wisdom is the arrangement of



our ideas in proper order, and in such a train as to produce some useful result. The understanding is the faculty of knowledge; but wisdom implies volition, or a purpose to effect an end, and the choice of the means by which it shall be effected. In creatures, they are often separated; but in an all-perfect Being, they are necessarily united; Omniscience supplies the materials of infinite wisdom. All nations have united in ascribing wisdom to God, and they have been led to this conclusion by the obvious and manifold proofs of it as found in the things that be: finding it, in some degree, in man, they reason from the effect to the cause, and wisely conclude that the effect can not be greater than the cause by which it is produced. This is certainly a safe way to reason, and by such a train of reasoning we may arrive at the truth.

In this lecture I shall consider the wisdom and benevolence of God with reference to man as His creature, and as His sinful creature.

Wisdom, as I have intimated above, consists in the choice of ends and suitable means to effect these ends; design simply implies that the agent has some object in view; and that the object is worthy of the agent and the means by which it is to be accomplished; else, instead of pronouncing the agent wise, we call him a *fool*. But it may be said that we are not competent to determine what is proper for God to do, or what is worthy of Him—a Being so far removed from us in perfection and glory. We are ready at once to acknowledge our incapacity to enter fully into the designs of the divine mind; yet, what He has been pleased to reveal to us, we may and we ought to know; hence,

when we see Him pursuing certain ends, there is no arrogance in saying that these ends are suitable to the dignity of His character as revealed to us. There is no arrogance in saying, that it is worthy of Him to glorify himself by the manifestation of His attributes; to communicate life and happiness to other beings; to uphold the great moral system to which He has given birth; and to promote the interests of righteousness and truth. These appear to be the very ends which are the objects of the divine dispensations; and we are so far from perceiving anything in them incongruous to the idea of an all-perfect Being, that they harmonize with all our conceptions of the transcendent excellence of His character.

Let us, in the first place, collect the proofs of wisdom from the visible creation. "How manifold, O Lord, are thy

works; in wisdom hast thou made them all, and the earth is full of thy riches.” *Psalm* cix, 24. Instances of contrivance present themselves everywhere. In the examination of the works of nature, we observe a wonderful adaptation of one thing to another, with a view to the production of a particular result, and the same purpose accomplished by such a vast variety of means, as can not fail to convince us, that the whole is the work of an intelligent Being. Rich in counsel, and wonderful in working, and that all bear striking marks of the wisdom of the “ONLY WISE GOD.” As the proofs of wisdom in creation constitute only one department of this subject, I can not allow myself to go into a minute detail, but must be content to give only a few particulars, and give but a general account even of these. I might refer you to the marks of design—which you see every-

where in the works of God—which prove an intelligent cause; and it would be improper to pass over this part of the subject without, at least, calling your attention to it.

Let us for a moment consider the arrangement of the system to which we belong. In the center is placed the sun, the great source of light and heat, who dispenses, without intermission, his influences to the surrounding planets which perform their revolutions around him. He at rest, they in motion; but they are retained in their paths around him by his masterly power over them, called attraction, and the mighty machine is incessantly working without confusion, or the slightest deviation of any of its parts. How admirable the solar system as now understood! Time was when the wisest philosophers supposed the earth at rest, and the sun, con-

taining so much more matter than the earth, daily wheeling his vastly rapid course around it: but by the developments of mind and science, we have discovered the more consistent view of this magnificent system. By the motion of the earth, the purposes which were supposed to be accomplished by the motion of the sun, are effected in a much more simple manner. By its diurnal motion around its own axis, its different parts of surface are brought alternately before the sun, and thus are the vicissitudes of day and night produced—so necessary to the well being and happiness of the creatures which God has given place on the earth's surface. In the day, men and animals carry on their various operations, and vegetables are nourished by his rays, and adorned with beautiful colors; in the night, all nature reposes in its darkness; all nature, by



the shades of night, is refreshed and restored to healthful and vigorous action. Who does not see in this the wisdom of the great Creator?

By the annual circuit of the earth, we enjoy the changes of the seasons, which delight us by a great variety of scenery, and is subservient to the purposes of vegetation, on which the life of all terrestrial animals depends. In winter, the earth rests and repairs its strength, and at the opening of spring is again ready for all its useful purposes; and thus it clothes the trees and fields with verdure, and rewards the husbandman for all his labor and care. I may be permitted to remark, that God has placed the earth in its present relative position to the sun, neither nearer to nor more distant from him with an exact adaptation of its inhabitants to this position: the inhabitants of earth, with their



present adaptation, brought nigher to, would suffer with perpetual heat; thrown more distant from, would suffer from eternal snow and ice; but as it is, there is adaptation. This is but another mark of the wisdom of God. The earth itself is fitted, by the wisdom of God, to all the purposes contemplated in its formation. It is composed of various substances adapted to various uses; but what I wish you more particularly to mark at present, is its surface. Had the earth been marble or sand, it would have been unfit for the habitation of man or beast, because it could not have afforded the means of subsistence; but the surface is a soft mold, adapted to all the purposes of vegetation; a large portion of it being covered with water, forms no objection; this furnishes a means, by commerce, to bind all the parts of this earth together; besides, it is the unfailing source of those exhalations

tions which descend upon us in rain and dew; and as the quantity of these, on the whole, is not more than sufficient to supply rivers and springs, and to nourish herbs and plants, and all the products of the earth, the wisdom of God is seen in the adaptation of one part of the earth's surface to the other.

Let us now take a view of the living creatures inhabiting earth, and we shall see many proofs of the wisdom of God in the formation of even their bodies—and especially of our own—which, according to a divine writer, is “fearfully and wonderfully made.” In considering man as related to material objects, amidst which he is placed, we can not fail to apprehend a wise adaptation between him and those objects. He is furnished with organs of sense—as are all other animals—to perceive them; and what is more in his case, he can discern the

qualities of those objects. This is necessary, not only for his comfort, but his very existence. When we examine these organs, the ear, the eye, the taste, the smell, and touch, both the design and the workmanship are calculated to excite the highest admiration. We can not tell how we hear, see, taste, smell, or touch; that is, how the peculiar sensation is produced, but we see an obvious design in them all, to accomplish each its appropriate office. The objects accomplished by means of the senses, prove that they are not the results of chance, but of a divine hand, guided by infinite wisdom. When we proceed in the examination, the evidences of wisdom multiply upon us, and are overpowering. What a variety of functions is performed by this body, organized as it is! What a provision of means and instrumentalities! How prompt in their offices, and

yet how delicate in their structure! The bones give stiffness; the joints qualify it to bend and yield to convenience; the muscles, fastened to the bones, are but so many elastic springs to produce motion and give symmetry; the waste to which the body is subject, is repaired by its capacity to receive and digest food, and convert it into its own substance, and by a curious apparatus, the aliment is distributed to every part of the frame—the expenditure is constant, and so is the supply. We can not live without air, so respiration is carried on by the mouth and lungs. The blood circulates by day and by night, and the secretions go on with perfect regularity when not interrupted by disease. There is one proof of the wisdom of God which I must not fail to mention, and that is, while some of the operations which are necessary to our well being are dependent

upon our own will, others of equal importance are involuntary. We respire, the blood flows, and many other processes are continued in sleep as well as when we are awake, for this obvious reason, the suspension of them would be fatal to life. God has, therefore, reserved them in His own hand; for He never slumbers nor sleeps, but lives and acts in every place, and at all times. There is manifest wisdom in this arrangement. Man is left to do what he can for his own comfort; but when his power is inadequate, another agency interposes to perfect the design. In many instances, the structure of the bodies of the lower animals resembles ours; and where a difference exists, it is but an additional evidence of the wisdom of God in adapting them to their mode of life.

We might strengthen this argument by a review of the intellectual and ac-

tive endowments of the human mind, from which it would appear with how much wisdom they are adapted to the condition of man as an inhabitant of this world, and as in a state of preparation for a state of future and higher existence. His mental frame is no less wonderful than his corporeal. Wherever we have, as yet, turned our eyes, we have been struck with the wisdom of God; but let us trace the wisdom of God, in the second place, as seen in His natural and moral government, as conducted by His immediate but invisible agency, and by the instrumentality of second causes, or the combined agency of men. So far as Providence is concerned in upholding the material system, and the living creatures which are void of reason, it is the continued exercise of that power by which they were at first brought into being. I shall not,



in this review, call your attention to this part of the subject *particularly*; but I shall confine myself, and your attention, to God's government over men, considered as moral agents, as beings possessed of reason, will, and active powers.

This, therefore, will lead me to consider the wisdom of God with reference to man as His creature. God said in the beginning, "Let us make man; let us make him in our image." And thus He made him. I have said in a former lecture, "that God, as a Sovereign in creation, had a right to make whatever seemed good in His sight, and to make it just as His wisdom might dictate, and His benevolence prompt." But I likewise said, "that as a Sovereign, He had no right, after making man as He did, subject to, and capable of, moral government, and placing all his interests in the hands of one man under the form of



federal government, to damn him without giving him a fair and equitable test of personal agency." It must be admitted, that if God is infinite in His wisdom, He knew just as well before He made man how he would act, as He did after He had made him; and if so, He made him in view of all the circumstances that have been attendant upon him through his whole history. A moral agent, who is not independent, and absolute, may change. God being the only such agent, is the only one but that may change in some sort. When, therefore, God at first made man, He did not, nor could He, have made him in a confirmed state, and made him, at the same time, an agent capable of virtue and happiness as the reward of that virtue; for all his acts of virtue would be referable to a superinducing power, and the quality of the act must be referred to the

producing power, and not to the instrument.

All things are known to God, from the beginning to the end; He, therefore, has no need to wait until a certain event is accomplished before He can adjust the following; but in His infinite knowledge, that which is to follow is as certainly known as that which is passed. If the will of God is the efficient agent in all the acts of men, and mind is only the instrument, and hence not subject to the control of moral law, then no one, in speaking of man, may apply to him the terms will, virtue or vice, right or wrong, innocence or guilt, for his actions are but the results of a superinducing power, and, as I said before, are referable to that power. In this event, the will of God alone is the pivot on which the present and eternal destiny of man turns.

No man will deny but that God, in the government of His natural kingdom, exercises His physical omnipotence. This is His ability to do anything which may be done by the exercise of direct power. But to confound this with His power to govern mind by moral law and moral influence, is to err exceedingly, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. How, for instance, would the ten commandments apply to the unconscious solar system? Sun, earth, moon, or stars, thou shalt love the Lord thy God, &c. As these are governed by physical power, they are necessary agents, that is, they perform their revolutions by fixed laws established by the absolute power of God, and hence are not accountable for their actions, neither are they capable of vice or virtue, and are, therefore, not capable of happiness or misery. But mind can not be governed by physical power This

is known by its nature. The laws by which mind and matter are governed, are just as different in their nature as the elements are to which they are applied. Losing sight of this distinction can but bewilder, for no man can reconcile accountability with fate. As well might God condemn this whirling earth for not making three hundred and seventy-five diurnal revolutions while performing its circuit, as to condemn a moral agent for his actions, if all His volitions and actions are determined by His immutable and absolute will; if He condemns the volitions and actions of such an agent, He but condemns His own volitions and actions—the agent being but the instrument by which He performs His volitions and actions. Will God hold man accountable for that which is unavoidable? Will God condemn him for doing that which he does by necessity?

Reason, common sense, conscience, and the Scriptures, say it can not so be. God's moral government over man is not resolved into a question of power.

When God at first made man, He endowed him with will, reason, and active powers. This is contained in the sentiment, "Let us make him in our own image and likeness." In what did that image consist? I answer, first, in his nature and constitution, not of his body, but of his soul, for God has no body. The soul is a spirit—an intelligent and immortal spirit—endowed by its Creator with reason, will, and active powers; herein is the brightest image of the Lord. "The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." Second, in his place and authority. "Let him have dominion." He is made sovereign over all below; yet, his government over himself, by the freedom of his will, has in it still more of

the image of God, and in this, is the true dignity of his nature, as a moral agent, seen. Third, in his purity and rectitude of character. God's image upon man, consists in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. He had moral conformity in all his powers to the whole will of God. His reason saw divine things truly and clearly; his will complied readily and universally with the will of God; his affections were all regular, nor had he any irregular appetites or passions to control; the image of God SHONE with peculiar splendor upon his immortal soul. God, as a Sovereign, had a right to make man bearing His own image; but the question is, had He, as a Sovereign, a right to damn him bearing His own image—all things remaining as they were? If He had such a right, then as a Sovereign, He has the right to damn His own moral likeness at



any period, either in time or eternity, His rights being immutable; and there could hence be no security from this awful catastrophe in time or eternity, if bearing the image of God does not give this security, and that, too, by divine right. But this is not all. God at first placed the destiny of an unborn race in the hands of one man, under the form of federal government. This man had all the moral and intellectual capabilities to sustain their interests under that form of government, and so bequeath to that race all the untold blessings of purity and immortality, by fidelity to his federal charge; he likewise had the capacity to bring upon them all the miseries of this life, and lay them liable to the horrors of the second death. The blessing or the curse grew out of the relation which subsisted between him and them; he was not only their common



father, but their federal head. This last relationship was constituted by law, which involved the interests of untold millions of human souls, hereafter to be born, both for time and eternity. This, too, was the plan of trial adopted by the infinite wisdom of the great God. Has He, as a Sovereign, a right to damn all the race for an event over which they have not, nor ever had, any control, and in which they have acted no part? If so, He has a right to damn every infant dying in a state of infancy; yet, we all believe that they are saved, and we are warranted in that belief by the revelation which God has given us of His procedure in such cases. God, in the creation of man, has given a magnificent display of His wisdom, both in the manner of His creation and the form of government under which He placed him, with capacities adapted to the nature of

that government. Let no one say, that the want of capacity to comply with the terms of that government, is owing to the manner of his creation. It is the misapplication of that in which alone his true dignity as a man consists—his moral agency—and for which alone God holds him accountable for his actions.

Wherever you turn your thoughts—whether to nature or nature's God—you behold the marks of the most profound wisdom. God, in creation, by the exercise of His infinite wisdom, has secured the most complete order in the visible creation; and to man—being the only creature belonging to this system, capable of conscious happiness—He has secured it by superadding to his intellectual nature, holiness, the perfection of mind. He has inseparably united holiness and happiness, so that the one may not be

possessed without the other following in its train, for holiness is in order to happiness. Here the wisdom of God again shines forth with peculiar luster; for holiness secures that order which is the peculiar luster of the moral government of God. I have endeavored, thus far, to consider the wisdom of God in reference to man as His creature, and as His creature, subject to, and capable of, moral government, and the wise adaptation of all things in this great system.

Let us next consider the benevolence of God. You must recollect that this is always directed by the wisdom of God to the most suitable means of accomplishing its great objects.

By the benevolence of God, we understand that principle of His nature which disposes Him to communicate happiness to His creatures. It is in this sense that we say it is one of His essential attributes.

It is necessary, with other attributes, to complete the idea of an all-perfect Being, and is the foundation of the trust, love, hope, and joy, with which He is regarded by all good men. As sinners, we could only think of Him with distant reverence, if we conceived that He took no interest in the well being of His creatures; and the supposition that He was actuated by a principle of malevolence, would create a dread of ONE infinitely superior to us, from whom we could not escape. Were this the view which we were bound to take of Him, we should always fear and tremble whenever the thought of Him came into our depraved mind. But the principle of benevolence in the DEITY throws a mild and tranquilizing luster over the majestic attributes of His all-glorious nature. It presents them to us under a friendly aspect; associated with IT, they appear as

so many powers, by which its benignant designs will be carried into full effect. In this view of the subject, we look up to God, not merely as a Sovereign, but as a FATHER. We feel emotions of gratitude rising in harmony with sentiments of reverence and veneration; we are hence enabled to supplicate His favor with confidence, and resign ourselves to His disposal.

Benevolence being a disposition to communicate happiness, in an intelligent agent it is always regulated by the exercise of wisdom; and in a moral agent, by a regard to purity and justice. From a survey of the dispensations of God, we learn that this attribute belongs to Him in each of the above senses.

The benevolence of God is clearly deducible from creation. I can conceive of no other reason, aside from His own glory, for the exercise of His power in

giving life to so many different orders of creatures, and adapting them all to their various modes of living, so as to derive happiness from the circumstances in which they are destined to move. God did not create by a necessity of nature, as the sun gives out light and heat, or as a fountain pours out its contents; but being a free and independent AGENT, He created by counsel and design. His power is unbounded; His wisdom infinite; yet His benevolence is the source of all this great work. The prime motive, aside from His own glory, was benevolence: this led Him to provide for the order and happiness of all, and especially for His sentient creatures; upon this principle, therefore, we account for the happiness of the various tribes of living creatures. What other idea is suggested by the contemplation of a system so regular and beautiful in all its parts, and teeming with life and en-



joyment? God, from His throne of universal dominion, beholds a scale of beings, ascending from the insect to the seraph, all rejoicing in conscious existence, and partaking of the riches of His liberality. In these things, I see—or I think I see—a bright display of the unbounded benevolence of God. The eternal fountain has overflowed, and the universe is refreshed and gladdened by its majestic stream. If there is any feature in the divine nature more prominent than another in this great work, it is the benevolence of God. This perfection may be inferred from the state in which living creatures are made. They are relatively perfect; that is, they are fitted to their mode of life, and to fill their appropriate place in creation.

The benevolence of God is seen in the abundant provisions He has made to meet and supply the wants of every living thing.



“The eyes of all wait upon thee; and thou givest them their meat in due season; thou openest thy hand and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.”

*Psalm cxlv*, 15, 16. With the bounty and care of a parent, He provides for His numerous family. What a delightful view this, of the benevolence of God. In the regular succession of the seasons, the opening buds and blossoms of spring, the luxuriant growth of summer, the matured fruits and rich harvest of autumn, is seen the resplendant goodness of the Almighty. By this provision, God performs the task of providing those ample and varied feasts to which He invites all His living offspring. “O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom thou hast made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.” Not only is the wisdom of God displayed in these things, but His benevolence also. Hitherto, we

have been considering the benevolence of God in a general sense.

Let us now consider it with peculiar reference to man as the creature—and as the sinful creature—of God. When God at first made man, He knew—as I have before said that he would not continue in a state of conscious rectitude, but that he would fall into sin. This being known, can the creation of man be reconciled with the divine benevolence? If the fall resulted from any deficiency in the powers of man to obey the law under which he was placed, or was superinduced by any agency of God exerted over him, directly or indirectly, it can not be reconciled with His benevolence; but if this were the result of his own actions, having at the same time power to have prevented it by a different course of conduct, then all is easy. After He had made man as He

did—a moral agent—to say He might have prevented his fall, is only to say that He could have changed him into something other than what He had made him. All that He could do, was in the exercise of wisdom and benevolence, to provide a system, that upon the principles of good government he might be saved. The benevolence of God is seen in the covenant that He made with man, promising to reward his obedience with everlasting felicity. This was the promise of boundless benevolence; for his obedience could entitle him to no such reward but for some such promise on the part of his MAKER. His obedience was a debt which he owed to God, and hence, if he had fulfilled the whole law, he had only done his duty, and could have claimed no such reward. The covenant, therefore, displays great condescension and benevolence in God, and a deep

solicitude for the happiness of man. By man's folly, he lost the noble prize set before him; but the event does not in any wise obscure the benignity from which the offer of it proceeded; and at our distance from the event, we ought to look back with grateful emotions upon the hope that animated our great progenitor in the commencement of his career, and the blessedness that through him might have descended as an inheritance to us, his children. The original state of man was a state of happiness. Peace and joy then reigned in his bosom, and a bright interminable prospect rose to his view. Nature was in harmony with his feelings, and was refulgent with the glory of his **MAKER**. In Paradise—which the hand of God had prepared with infinite skill for his residence—all was beauty, melody, and delight. The gentle breezes fanned the opening flowers; the unplowed

earth yielded its delicious fruits; the rivers flowed with milk and nectar, and honey distilled from the oak. But a new state of things calls for our attention. This beautiful state of things has been defaced—Man has sinned!! Yet God has not withdrawn His benevolence from this mighty system. When God made man, He required that he should perform a test act, as needs he must, since He was dealing with a moral agent, upon whose agency depended his future and eternal happiness. This test act was perfect obedience to the law of God, and to be performed under the free volitions of his own will. Two objects were placed before him—good and evil: his obedience was encouraged by the promise of reward, and guarded by the denunciation of threatenings; both the one and the other prompted by the benevolence of God to guard his way to hap-

piness. But man sinned: then God might punish him as seemed good in His sight; for he had had a fair and equitable test of moral agency. But He may not let him live and propagate his kind, and then damn them for what he had done before they were born. Hence, in the wisdom and benevolence of God, He provides the great system of Gospel salvation, that He may treat with man according to the dignity of his nature as a moral agent, and again place him where he may have the privilege of performing a test act, and thus give him a fair and equitable test of moral agency. God, as a Sovereign, has no more right to save man without his agency being tested, than He has to damn him. The great system of salvation and condemnation proceeds upon the principle, "Light has come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light."



You may here ask, how I account for the salvation of infants dying in a state of infancy, in view of the above? They are not moral agents, hence there is no test act necessary to their salvation; yet they have immortal souls, which are corrupt and polluted, and this corruption and pollution are in their case passive—so they sustain a passive relation to the great system of Gospel salvation. They come into the world in a state of corruption, which they can not control, and if, before their moral powers are developed, God in His providence determines to remove them by death to the spirit world, He will sovereignly apply to them the cleansing efficacy of His grace; and in doing so, He does not conflict with the moral agency in the least. For, as I have before said, they are not such agents. But men are not infants; they have developed the powers of moral



agency, and God will deal with them as such; hence the command, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned."

Salvation originated in the benevolence of God, as well as creation. The permission of sin by no means implies its approbation; the evils which it brings on man in this life, but demonstrate God's displeasure against it; and when we turn to His Word, we find Him speaking in terms of the utmost abhorrence against it. If, therefore, man was justly condemned, the notion of any obligation to relieve him must be given up forever; and we must conclude that whatever God does for his recovery, is of His own unbounded mercy, and must tend to His glory as well as to man's good. It is to the benevolence of God alone that we must attribute this

noblest of His works. Wisdom presides while benevolence prompts to this glorious work of salvation for our ruined race. The means by which this work was accomplished, demonstrate how agreeable to God is the happiness of His creature, man—and how earnestly he desires it. Could a word save man from perdition, it would be highly benevolent in God to pronounce that word? But salvation is not a work of words, or of physical Omnipotence, nor of unrestrained benevolence, but a moral administration of means and agencies adapted to the condition of man as a fallen sinner, subject to, and capable of, moral government. It hence exhibits a combination of means illustrative of His wisdom and benevolence. “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—*John* iii, 16. In

this passage of Scripture, you have the source, the love of God, the objects of His benevolence, the world, the gift of God, His Son, and the design of all of it, that they might have everlasting life. Faith in this, and in all similar passages, is made the test act upon which the enjoyment of this blessing depends. If we were prepared to comprehend how many and great are the blessings with which we are enriched, and how many and great are the evils from which we are delivered by this glorious system of God's mercy, then should we be able to understand, in some sort, the boundlessness of God's benevolence to fallen man. But while we contemplate this mighty scheme, we are lost and overpowered by His matchless wisdom and unspeakable benevolence.

Contemplate, if you please, what this system of things is to accomplish in time.

It is to vanquish and strip the last and dreaded foe of man of his spoils; under its influence, the grave is to give up its dead; the earth is to be purified and renovated, and once more become the abode of innocence and joy; the choice of all generations are to be united in one glorious assembly; angels associated with men, and God himself come down to dwell with them.”—*Rev.* xxi, 34. Such is the delightful scene to which we are directed by prophecy. It is the reign of order and happiness, succeeding ages of turmoil and sorrow; it is an eternal spring, after a long, tedious, and dreary winter; it is the triumph of boundless benevolence, which will fill all holy beings with ceaseless happiness.

“O that men would praise the Lord for His goodness and His wonderful works to the children of men.” *Grati-*

tude is the return justly due from creatures to God for His stupendous benevolence to them. But it is often withheld from our bountiful benefactor, for the reason, that His goodness is perpetual; hence we do not seem to feel and appreciate it. The benevolence of God is impressed upon the character of all His works. It is one of the strongest reasons why we should love and serve Him; and it renders those inexcusable who live without any acknowledgment of Him, or dare accuse His dispensations with unkindness. By the Gospel of the grace of God, life and immortality are brought to light. Man, by his own act, brought death and misery upon himself and posterity. But in the Gospel, we find a glorious system presented, which places in the offer of man everlasting life; and to secure which, he has but to perform a test

act, which is faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and then the bliss of eternal life is his. How wise and benevolent the plan! How easy and reasonable the terms! How rich the blessing! And shall any one at last be cast into that lake which burns with fire and brimstone? Into this subject we shall inquire in our next lecture.

## LECTURE III.

### MAN'S MORAL AGENCY, AND THE FINALLY IMPENITENT SINNER'S DOOM.

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“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.”—GENESIS ii, 16, 17.

IN the garden, there were two fruitful trees, the one the tree of life; that is, it was to man a pledge and seal of life and immortality: the other the tree of knowledge of good and evil; that is, it was to man a test of moral agency and character. So long as he refrained from the latter, he had the evidence of conscious innocence, and had freedom of ac-



cess to the former: but so soon as he partook of the latter, he forfeited his right to the former, and had evidence of conscious guilt. God, as a Sovereign, had a right to establish a test of moral agency and character for man, and also had a right to make that test whatever He chose, provided it did not conflict with any of man's chartered rights as a moral agent. It was God's right to give man a law by which he should be governed—yet so as that the moral nature of the law and man's moral nature and character as he was made, should correspond the one with the other. If there is not adaptation between the nature of man and the law by which God proposes to govern him, there is a manifest want of wisdom and benevolence in the arrangement. In this covenant there is a grant of confirmation in a state of permanent holiness and immortality, not

only to himself, but also to his posterity. This, however, is pendant upon perfect obedience to the law of God. As yet, man has no personal character; all that he has is of Sovereign gift—which he received in his creation. In his probation, God requires that he shall adopt this gift by his own moral agency as his personal character; this is required, that the bliss hereafter accruing to him may be regarded by him as the fruit of his own volitions and actions—vouchsafed to him by virtue of the divine promise. Without such promise, his volitions and actions could entitle him to no such bliss and immortality. All that he could do was his duty, and for doing this he could claim no such reward.

God having finished all His other works, made man—and constituted him lord of all below. His body was made of the dust of the earth, and animated

by an intelligent and immortal soul. Besides the gift of reason—by which he was distinguished from the other inhabitants of earth—there was superadded true holiness, in which the image of God properly consisted, and thus was he fitted to accomplish all the ends for which he was created, and in a peculiar sense to glorify the Great Author of his being. The happiness which he enjoyed was suited to his compound nature, which derived pure pleasure from the contemplation of the things with which he was surrounded; and still higher satisfaction from conscious rectitude, and a knowledge of the favor of God. Placed in the fairest spot of earth, where his eye, his ear, and all his senses were delighted, he enjoyed high and sacred communion with his MAKER.

Although man was holy, yet he was fallible—as every creature is. I do not

say that every creature must fall into sin, but I do say, that the nature of a creature is not immutable, nor can it be so. Consequent, therefore, upon the creation of an intelligent agent, is a liability to change from good to evil, from virtue to vice, and consequently, from happiness to misery; yet this is not a necessary consequence, but a mere liability. Neither the power, the wisdom, nor the benevolence of God, can change this liability; the only way to prevent it, is not to create such a being at all. The question then is, was God wise and benevolent in creating this great moral system? We have already attempted, in a former lecture, to illustrate these points. Mutability is inseparable from the idea of a created moral agent. Freedom of will implies the power of choice; that of two or more objects presented, the agent may choose either. If he may choose the

one but not the other, then is he not free; nor does it matter whether the restraint is owing to his nature or some secret agency exerted upon his will, the case is the same. The act is, therefore, not his voluntary act, but superinduced; and hence he is but the passive instrument, and not the active agent. In this case he would be a creature totally different from what man now is, or ever has been: he was, at first, and still is, endowed with liberty of volition and action. Upon this principle alone does God hold him accountable for his thoughts, words, and actions. We have no reason to suppose that this liberty will cease even in a confirmed state; although the will invariably chooses that which is good, it is still most free in all its volitions. The confirmation of saints takes place by the consent of their own will, and they are still as free as ever,

because they are what they are by their voluntary consent. If they can not sin, the reason is, they will not; they have voluntarily performed the test act, and have hence chosen the service of God for life, and godliness for time and eternity. Their choice in becoming Christians, covers time and eternity. From these remarks, you may infer that the fall of man did not necessarily result from his original constitution; but his will being free, he might choose the evil and refuse the good, which first he did, as the subsequent history shows.

As we have before said, man's original state was pure and holy. But it did not long continue. We have no reason to believe, as some suppose, that man sinned upon the day of his creation; and we have just as little reason to suppose he retained his rectitude for years. The fine gold soon became dim; the crown

soon fell from his head. There was but a short interval elapsed ere man incurred the displeasure of his MAKER, and holiness—the beauty of his nature—was succeeded by the most revolting deformity, and he presented scarce anything but an awful wreck of depraved human nature, all of which resulted from his voluntary act, and from no deficiency of his nature; nor yet from the exercise of any divine agency, directly or indirectly, superinducing this result. But, it may be asked, why did God bestow upon man a power, the abuse of which would bring such ruinous consequences upon himself and posterity, and so insult the authority of God? This is the amount of the question: Why did God create a creature capable of being the subject of moral government and moral law, and of obtaining and enjoying a reward? Or, why did not God make man something other



than He did? This is not only to call in question the benignity of God, but also to arraign His wisdom at the bar of our ignorance and presumption. Had he not possessed liberty of choice, he could not have rendered moral obedience; he might have been so created as that he might have answered the end of his creation as the index of a clock or watch points out the hour of the day upon the dial plate; but he would not, in this case, have been a man any more than a clock or watch is a man. There could have been neither virtue nor vice in his movements, and he would have, in this case, glorified God only as fire, hail, snow, and stormy winds glorify Him. As the heavens and the earth, with all their teeming inhabitants, glorified God after this manner, it was necessary—in order to perfect the design of Almighty God—to raise up a being who, knowing his

MAKER, and approving His will, should execute His commands from design, under the influence of gratitude and love. To do this, he must be endowed with reason, will, and active powers, constituting him at once a moral agent. Such is man, and as such, he is capable of good and evil, of happiness and misery. But do you ask why God permitted sin? Why do you not ask why did God make such a being as man? Then the sentiment would stand thus: He whom we have been accustomed to regard as the crowning work of creation, was the only part of it which impeached the wisdom and benevolence of its great AUTHOR. It is certain that God created man with freedom of will; it is equally certain that man, in the exercise of this freedom, lost his innocence and happiness, and upon this principle God holds him accountable for his conduct.

Man being created a moral agent, was the proper subject of moral precept, and accordingly was placed under the law of God—the knowledge of which was impressed upon his mind at his creation. This law was virtually the same with that which was afterward engraven upon the tables of stone, and delivered to MOSES; and has been the standard of duty to man in every age of the world. To all the precepts of the law he, was bound to render obedience; to do this, he was furnished with ample powers. God, however, suspended the test of his moral principles upon one positive command—and thus to determine whether man's obedience was influenced by His naked authority. You will hence perceive, that if God intended to make trial of this newly formed subject, He could not have chosen a more proper method, as the command indicated

nothing hard or harsh; but was admirably fitted to ascertain whether His simple command would be to him instead of all other reasons for obedience. It is not a proper trial of reverence for a superior when the action enjoined is recommended by a train of circumstances aside from His command. It is when it stands upon the sole foundation of His authority; when having no intrinsic goodness, it becomes good by His positive injunction; when the only inducement to perform it is His authority. It is under these circumstances that it is known whether we duly feel and recognize our moral dependance upon Him. The morality of an act does not hence depend upon its abstract nature, but upon its relation to the law of God. The injunction, therefore, to abstain from the tree of knowledge, was a proper trial of man's obedience to the authority of his MAKER; and

the violation of the command deserved the punishment which was threatened and executed upon him. This command tested the only thing to be tested, and that was, whether God's will was sacred to him above all things else. And he was punished because he gave the preference to his own. The command was easy, yet it was soon broken. Man yielded to temptation, and thereby ruined himself and posterity. Our first parents were guilty of sin in their hearts before they committed it with their hands. Their eating the forbidden fruit was only the outward expression of the vitiated state of their minds. The desire of knowledge, by unlawful means, being indulged, disordered their whole moral constitution; and they had already rebelled before they openly violated the command. "Lust," or desire, "when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is

finished, bringeth forth death.” — *James* i, 15.

First: God created man holy, without any defect, any weakness, or any tendency to sin. Every power was conferred upon him which was needful to enable him to maintain the rank and perform the duties assigned him.

Second: God set before him the most suitable motives to secure his obedience. He promises, as its reward, eternal happiness to himself and posterity; and he denounces death as the penalty of sin, and the trial proposed was perfectly easy. The restraint can scarcely be considered as a restraint, surrounded as he was with the choicest and most abundant productions of Paradise.

Third: God did not withdraw from man—in the time of danger and trial—the ability with which He had furnished him for his duty. His holiness was un-

impaired until he yielded to the temptation; his faculties were continued in their full vigor; no means were employed to darken his understanding and seduce his affections, but by the Tempter. God was still present to yield him any assistance that he might ask, and He never abandoned him until he actually sinned. If we attend to these observations, we shall perceive that the fall was his own voluntary act; and one, too, that God could not have prevented without, at least for the time, destroying the freedom of his will; and this He could not do without interfering with man's chartered rights, and making him something other than He had made him.

Looking at the sin of man as his voluntary act, it certainly was an act of daring rebellion, and justly deserved the punishment which ensued. What he did, he did in full view of the threatening de-



nounced against sin; but listening to the Tempter, he disregarded God's command. The wisdom and benevolence of God have done all that could be done consistently with man's moral agency to prevent this state of things, and all have failed; may not God now punish him for his sin, and ought He not to punish him? Has he not forfeited all claim to life, temporal, spiritual, and eternal? If there should be anything done for his happiness hereafter, from whence may we expect it? Man is now under the righteous condemnation of the law of God; nor has he any claim on the mercy of God; he has forfeited all; he has disregarded the high authority of his MAKER, and brought upon himself and posterity, ruin and death. This wreck of our race—universal as it is—I charge to the senior propagator of Universalism. He then had the face to stand forth in the presence of

the woman, and contradict positively what God had said. Our parents—the great progenitors of the race and their fallen posterity—have been paying the forfeit of false doctrine from then until now. And but for the compassion of God, the door of hope must have been forever shut, and man doomed to eternal hell. I have attempted to show that sin entered the world through the agency of man, and that he alone is accountable for all that it has ever done. The will of God had nothing to do with the introduction of sin into the world; for if He willed it into the world, He must have gone out of himself for a motive—for there is nothing like it in His nature. If, therefore, He goes out of himself for a motive, He is not, nor can He be, the self-existent, independent, and all-sufficient God of eternity.

As an evidence that God did not will

sin into the world, see the great moral administration of means and mercies He has put into operation to eradicate it therefrom. If He willed it into the world, He might as readily will it out. This would be much the shortest method of getting clear of it; but this He can not do, since He had no agency in bringing it into the world. Upon the first visit He made man after his fall, He gave him a promise that opened to him the door of hope. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." In this promise is contained the great Gospel system with its means and instrumentalities, and thus the door of hope was opened to man. I have said, that God, as a Sovereign, had no right to damn man without giving him a fair and equitable test of personal agency. No more has He a right to save him without giving him such test of agency.

It was by the abuse of this agency that he forfeited his right to a state of future and endless felicity, and brought upon himself, and posterity, sin, and all its miseries and liabilities. God, in the covenant of grace, has adapted the Gospel system to man as a sinner, just as He adapted the covenant of works to man in a state of purity and innocence. It is just as easy for a sinner now to obey the Gospel with all its influences around him as it was for man to obey the stipulations of the covenant of works in his conscious state of innocence and rectitude. To question this proposition, is to say that there is not adaptation in the Gospel system to the condition of him for whom it was provided. This would be to reflect upon the wisdom and benevolence of God. If under the Gospel of the grace of God man is not saved, it will be for the abuse of his

agency—the same crime for which man was originally cursed. But upon what principle does the Gospel system offer salvation to a guilty sinner? Not unconditionally. This it can not do, without disregarding or destroying the agency of man—and so his accountability—and rendering him incapable of virtue or vice, happiness or misery. Would it be wise or benevolent in God to introduce a system that would destroy man's capacity to enjoy happiness for the sake of destroying his capacity to suffer, and thereby defeat His avowed design in the whole moral arrangement? To give the conscious enjoyment of eternal life to as many as believe on His Son, the Gospel system is conditional, as needs it must be, to be adapted to man's condition as a moral agent. His having sinned has not changed his constitutional nature, nor has the Gospel changed it.

Sin has changed the quality of his moral character, and brought him under condemnation. The Gospel system has arrested the execution of that condemnation, and again placed life before him. As the law called for perfect obedience as a proper qualification preceding the enjoyment of eternal felicity, so the Gospel calls for faith in our Lord Jesus Christ as a state of mind properly preceding the enjoyment of eternal life. As obedience was made the test under the law, so faith is made the test under the Gospel; and as condemnation followed in the train of disobedience under the law, so damnation follows in the train of unbelief under the Gospel.

Let us inquire in what the wisdom and benevolence of God may be seen, in the great system of Gospel salvation? Are they to be seen in the fact, that sinners are saved to the enjoyment of God

in Heaven? I say, they shine forth in the provisions of salvation for the race of sinners, and in the universal offer thereof to fallen men; and if, after all, the whole race should be damned, the wisdom and benevolence of God will shine forth with undiminished splendor. But, you may ask, if in that case the Gospel system would not be a splendid failure? I answer, it would not, unless it can be shown that the Gospel, with its means and instrumentalities, is not adapted to the condition of man as a sinner, and his capacity as a moral agent: but it would be a failure were God to save man by a system unadapted to his dignity of nature as a moral agent; and could in His wisdom devise no means by which He could save him without destroying his endowments as such an agent. To resolve the Gospel system into a system of physical power, is to re-



flect dishonor upon the wisdom of God, and utterly to disregard the intellectual and moral endowments of man. It is, in the first instance, to allow that God governs mind by the same kind of laws that He governs matter; and is to assume that, in His wisdom, He has not, or could not, adopt appropriate laws for the government of mind. In the second instance, it is to assume that man has no higher endowments than matter, and that he is hence not a moral agent capable of being governed by moral precept; but that he is a passive instrument, governed by physical force. As I have said before, God's government over man, is a great moral administration; and the Gospel system is a moral administration, adapted to man as a fallen, guilty sinner. Hence the commission given by our Lord to His apostles, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every

creature; he that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." The command, go preach, is from God, and hence of high authority. The Gospel, in the Gospel, we have the proposition of salvation; the great Gospel charter offers salvation and eternal life to guilty man—wherever it goes. The whole world is the field to be occupied, and every creature the proper subject of Gospel address. The command can not be broader than the field; nor the address more special than the provision; yet it is to every creature. But, what is the condition upon which the blessings of the Gospel may be enjoyed? "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved." Faith is here made the condition. But why? Because God treats with man as a moral agent, and will not save him contrary to that principle of his nature—for it is in

this that his true dignity of nature consists. He being endowed with reason, will, and active powers, God so addresses him, and hence the Gospel submits a proposition to his reason, embracing two objects—salvation and damnation. Being endowed with will, he is required to accept the offered salvation, and thus choose between these two objects; and being endowed with active powers, he is, under the Gospel plan, capable of this important work. If he reject the offer—as he may do—as a consequence thereupon he chooses damnation; for these two things are fairly before him, and he can not reject the one without at the same time choosing the other. In this view of the subject, to damn a sinner, is only to do for him that which he voluntarily chooses in view of all the circumstances. And in doing this, God but vindicates His authority, and acts in accordance with

man's voluntary agency. The Gospel is a moral administration of means and instrumentalities, adapted to man's condition as a sinner, subject to, and capable of, moral government; and, of course, addressed to his moral agency—consisting of reason, will, and active powers. In this great moral system, there is established one condition—and but one—and that is, personal faith in our Lord Jesus Christ: possessing this, gives a title to all the new covenant blessings; and no moral agent may enjoy any of these blessings without having complied with this condition *fully*. The enjoyment of any of these blessings is evidence that the agent has complied with this condition. The salvation of the soul is suspended upon this condition, for the reason, that it is a proper test of man's moral agency under the Gospel: if, therefore, he is saved, he is saved by his own

consent, and this must be obtained before death, "for there is no device or work in the grave to which we haste." Whatever, therefore, is done by man in forming his moral character for eternity, must be done in time; for I can see no adaptedness in the Gospel system to man in a disembodied state; so that the idea of the sanctifying process of the resurrection is as false as it is delusive. The resurrection being effected, the last act of Christ's mediatorial work being accomplished, His mediatorial kingdom—which is a kingdom of delegation and limitation—will be delivered up to God, even the Father. What I mean by a delegated kingdom is, that it is not a natural kingdom. Jesus Christ, as God, possesses universal kingdom; but this is not His mediatorial kingdom; this He has by special delegation as the Saviour of sinners; and this is the kingdom that

He will deliver up. What I mean by a kingdom of limitation, is, that it is limited as to time; there is a period in which its designs may be accomplished, and when they are, then shall the end come.”

1 *Cor.* xv, 24. The grand design of this kingdom, is to prepare the inhabitants of this world for eternity. This it does by placing before them a fair and equitable test of personal agency under the provisions of the Gospel, that in view of this, they may form, in time, their moral character for eternity; that they may do this, the Gospel places before them two objects—life and death—between these they are at liberty to choose the one or the other, and upon their choice being fully determined, they are confirmed in their state for time and eternity. Their destiny is hence determined by their own acts in voluntarily choosing life or rejecting it, and thereby choosing death.

The two things are placed clearly before them, nor are the circumstances attending either choice concealed from them, but what they do, they do with all the consequences of time and eternity fully before them. The wisdom and benevolence of God are to be seen in placing before them the great moral system of means and agencies, by a proper improvement of which, they may be sanctified by its all-cleansing efficacy, and so fitted for the enjoyment of life for ever more; but by neglecting or rejecting this great system of means, they determine upon death by suffering their corruption to remain. The means and instrumentalities are ready; God has provided them, and they are in their offer; but they refuse to apply them, and so they die. If a sinner have Heaven and eternal life in his offer, and he refuse to accept them, and perish, whose is the



fault? Surely there is no blame to be attached to the wisdom and benevolence of God, which offer these blessings to him; but his folly is manifest in rejecting the offered good. I then repeat, if the whole race were at last damned eternally, the wisdom and benevolence of God in providing and offering salvation to man—adapted to him as a fallen sinner—subject to, and capable of, moral government, would shine forth with undiminished splendor. This, then, is the condemnation, “that light is come into the world, and men love—*choose*—darkness rather than light.” We have, as moral agents, the privilege to say (if not in word, in act), whether we will live amid the bliss of Heaven, or suffer all the miseries and anguish of lost souls. As a Sovereign, God has a right, no less under the Gospel than under the law, to establish a test act, and this right He

has exercised. Faith in Jesus Christ is this test act. This gives connection with Him, and thereby to all the blessings of the Gospel of the grace of God, the absence of which is fatal to the highest interests of the soul for time and eternity. "He that believeth not, shall be damned." In this, the immutable purpose of God is declared to punish the finally impenitent with an everlasting punishment. If this mean nothing more than death and the grave, then the righteous suffer as do the wicked, unless it can be shown that faith in Christ secures the believer both from the one and the other—and no sane man will undertake this. In this passage there is something pronounced against the wicked that never befalls the righteous. God makes a distinction between virtue and vice, between faith and unbelief.

Is God a God of infinite perfection?

If so, He is a God of truth and faithfulness, as well as love and mercy. Truth and faithfulness, no less than love and mercy, constitute a part in the infinite excellence of the Deity. If so, He is bound to make good His threatenings, no less than to fulfill His promises. "The hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation."—*John* v, 28, 29. "But now God commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."—*Acts* xvii, 30, 31. The command. to repent, is universal; and it

is based upon the moral agency of man as being capable of doing the good contemplated in the first quotation, and thus forming a proper personal character for which he alone is accountable. Upon this principle, too, stands God's settled purpose to judge the world in righteousness. The command being founded in just principles, the judgment will proceed upon the same. He will judge the world in righteousness, and whatever is found in man contrary thereto, He will, He must, condemn. The trump of God will sound; the dead will be raised up, and the living will be changed; the mediatorial kingdom will be delivered up; the judgment will set; and then shall the Son of man descend, attended by all the holy angels, to judge the world in righteousness. Before Him, not as a mediator, but as a judge, will the assembled world now stand. In the re-

urrection, they come forth from their graves in the specific moral character formed by them during their probation; hence, it is said, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. Where did they do good or evil? Surely not in their graves, but during their lives. Now that they are before the judge, there is no possibility of a change of moral character; for the mediatorial kingdom is given up, and they are confirmed in their state as they formed their character during the mediatorial reign. Christ is not now their mediator, but their awful judge. He does not hence call sinners to Him to save them, but to pronounce upon them their final sentence, according to the deeds done in the body—not out of it—else the apostle was mistaken. “For we must all appear before the

judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."—2 *Cor.* v, 10.

The punishment of the sinner is not blotting him out of existence; for it is a positive punishment. If I may so say, it is a living death: man dying, and yet forbid to die. It is called everlasting destruction; but it is not the destruction of personality or consciousness. They are cut off from hope, and consequently from all conscious happiness. Separated from all the means of good, they will be afflicted with incessant restlessness, and feel the torment of desires which it will be impossible to gratify. They will agonize under a sense of the divine displeasure by the accusations of conscience and by the horrors of despair. From this state of dereliction and absolute wretchedness, there is no relief; no pros-

pect of escape. Hope, which animates all in this life, never comes to such as have failed in their state of trial. No new opportunity will be afforded to correct the fatal error. The ruin of our race in the fall would have been complete had not God, in His untold wisdom and boundless benevolence, introduced the great system of Gospel grace, and thereby caught man as he was falling into the awful abyss of changeless ruin, and thus afforded to man a new test act, which threw open to him the door of hope. Now his happiness or misery is not in the hands of another, but in his own—in so far as agency is concerned. If he now throws away his happiness for a mess of potage, he may not expect another offer; for this will be his own personal act. The final loss of a being destined to live forever, and capable of perpetual improvements and



felicity, is an awful thought. It is totally different from the wreck of a globe like the earth on which we live; for when matter is deranged or scattered, there is no suffering; but in the wreck of a soul is connected every conceivable anguish. As I have more than intimated, the punishment that God will inflict upon the unbelieving, is everlasting. I know that it is contended, that all the sufferings of man are disciplinary, and hence are working for his good, and will finally work his deliverance from sin: man sins and suffers, and sins and suffers, by the accusations of a guilty conscience, and so he atones for his sin as he commits it, and hence his whole life is a scene of sin and suffering, so that when he dies he goes directly to Heaven. Now suppose this to be true, what is the principle upon which he enters that place of supreme happiness? Is it

through the atoning merits of the blood of Christ? or by virtue of his own sufferings for his sins? What proportion, I would ask, is there between his sufferings and eternal life? If he enter Heaven in this way, it will be contrary to all the principles of the Gospel as revealed to us. There is no place in the Gospel where a life of sin is made the condition upon which any may enter the bliss of Heaven. Were this the case, the whole Gospel economy would be a nullity. There is still another absurdity in the thing, and that is, suffering being the effect of sin, it is saying that the effect may rise higher than its cause, and destroy it. This can not be. Moreover, there will be seen neither the wisdom nor the benevolence of God in admitting any one into Heaven unless he is in some way dependent on Him for this high privilege, and the system by which it is

conferred upon him. If suffering entitle him to the kingdom of Heaven, and he endures these sufferings for himself, then is he not dependent upon the atonement of Christ for his title to the heavenly inheritance. Yet, the Bible says, "there is none other name given under heaven, or amongst men, whereby we must be saved." So that with the Bible, I conclude that none will ever enter that place of supreme felicity but by virtue of a living connection with Christ, obtained by faith. "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; and he that believeth not, shall be damned." Faith is made the condition of salvation—without which, no moral agent will ever be saved. Unbelief is the condition of damnation—without which, none will be damned.

I have introduced a passage of Scripture to prove that God punished the

wicked with endless punishment, and that His character, as a God of purity, demands that He should execute it upon all the finally impenitent. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them, in like manner giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." — *Jude* 7. Here are persons who, Jude says, suffer everlasting punishment. I know the quibble about the words eternal and everlasting. If they do not mean endless when they speak of punishment, no more do they mean endless when they speak of happiness. The same rule of criticism that destroys from the teachings of the Bible the idea of endless misery, destroys equally the idea of endless happiness, and at the same time says there is neither Heaven nor Hell in the future. In this view of the subject, I

should like to know what will become of man when he leaves this present state of things. If God has said the wicked shall suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, His immutable truth will bind Him to execute that sentence upon them. But you may ask, how a God of infinite benevolence can punish His creature—man, with everlasting punishment? I ask, in turn, how can a God of inviolable truth denounce such a punishment against sin and then fail to execute it? As I have before said, the benevolence of God is concerned much more in the provisions of the Gospel for man's happiness, than in his final salvation; and in those provisions He has set forth His benevolence in such way, as that if the whole race should be damned, His benevolence would still shine forth with peculiar luster and glory. If sinners are lost, it will not be because God has not made provision

for them, and offered salvation to them. God did love them, and as such gave His Son to die for them, and hence salvation, by the Spirit and Gospel, is offered to them. If, therefore, they perish, it will be because they reject, upon their own responsibility, the great system of Gospel salvation. In this place I purpose giving an article from Universalism, as adopted by the General Convention of Universalists in the United States, at their session in 1803, and so far as I know, has never been changed:

“ARTICLE 1. We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, contain a revelation of the character of God, and of the duty, interest, and final destination of mankind.”

I do not know how it is possible that any set of men, laying any claim to common sense, can believe that the Bible is a revelation from God, and at the same

time teach that all hypocrites, liars, drunkards, assassins, and hangmen, go directly from their deeds of hypocrisy, falsehood, debauchery, and murder, to Heaven, when the Scriptures, which they profess as a revelation from God, say they shall not enter that holy and happy place.

“ARTICLE 2. We believe that there is one God, whose nature is love, revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of grace, who will finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness.

“ARTICLE 3. We believe that holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected; and that believers ought to be careful to maintain order, and practice good works; for these things are good and profitable unto men.”

Now, in all this, I can see no mention of, or provision for, the remission of sin;



the doctrine of justification does not, in my judgment, enter into the system at all. This is surely foreign from the Gospel system. The apostle says, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Rom. v, 1.* When the Bible says, "He that believeth not, shall be damned," Universalism says, he that believeth not, shall be saved. Do they believe the Bible to be a revelation from God? I leave you, reader, to judge between them and the Bible. Universalists profess to have a greater regard for the character of God than other men. Yet they think it no reflection upon His character to say—when He solemnly denounces endless punishment upon the finally impenitent—that He is insincere, and speaks but to torment before the time. Our God is more benevolent than theirs, and what is more, He always speaks the

truth; nor does He tamper with the deathless interests of the soul, nor raise expectations that shall never be realized. The Christian's God is consistent with himself, and deals with man as a moral agent. He holds out to him, as a reward of fidelity, eternal life, to which he could have no title but for the divine promise. Faith and obedience are but his bounden duty, and his reasonable service; yet God has been pleased to connect therewith the promise of eternal life: sooner, therefore, shall Heaven and earth pass away than His word of promise shall fail. To discover to man how exceeding sinful sin is in His sight, He has denounced against it eternal punishment, thus to deter man from the practice of it. Had He not done this, there would have been one argument remaining that God might have introduced to secure the happiness of man, but failed to use it. The bene-

volence of God led Him to do all that He could, consistently with man's moral agency, to secure his eternal happiness; hence his holiness is encouraged by the promise of reward, and a reward, too, infinitely superior to his obedience. He is deterred from a life of sin by the denunciation of eternal punishment; hence his way to happiness is surrounded on every side; there is not a single argument that infinite benevolence might employ, but has been introduced to encourage and prompt man to follow after holiness, and thereby secure the favor of God. When I look to the Gospel, with its few, but well adapted instrumentalities, I am brought irresistably to this conclusion, that a man who is lost under the Gospel system, could not be saved as a man; and to save him, God must make him something other than He has made him. This would be to destroy

his agency, and hence his accountability; and this God will never do.

Contemplate God seated upon His throne of universal dominion, His sovereign hand controlled by wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth, and rejoice in the fact that He is sovereign.

This great moral system is not left to blind chance or stern necessity; but God, the great Creator, presides in infinite wisdom, boundless benevolence, and eternal rectitude. He rides upon the wind, thunders in the storm, blazes in the lightning, and His throne is surrounded with clouds and thick darkness; yet, He dwells in light as in a garment.

Contemplate man at first made in the image of God, placed in the most beautiful spot on earth, where all was order, beauty, and melody; the gentle breezes fanned the flowers; the unplowed earth yielded its rich fruits and harvest; and

honey distilled from the oak. Add to this the conscious rectitude of man's moral character; the high and holy communion he had with his CREATOR; the universal dominion he had over all below, and especially the freedom of his will to govern himself, and the boundless prospect of happiness which rose before him. Man's primeval state was surely a state of unmixed happiness.

Contemplate him as a moral agent—subject to, and capable of, moral government—and you see man in all the glory of manhood, having in his own hands the future destiny of himself and untold millions of human souls yet to be born; having it in his power to bequeath to them all the blessings of an endless state of immortality and bliss. But turn your eye again and you see this beautiful picture turned into a scene of the greatest deformity. Man has sinned, and the curse

of God has fallen upon him, and all around him. Darkness now covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. This act was man's voluntary act, and the curse of God ensues as the just punishment of man for his sin.

Contemplate the great moral administration which God, of His infinite goodness, prepares to catch man as he falls. He is not unmindful of this, his noble work; but provides a ransom for man, that he may not fall into a state of hopeless despair. When the fullness of the time was come, God sent His Son to die, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The Gospel is now adapted to him as a fallen sinner. This he is required to embrace, that he may live forever.

Contemplate what the Gospel is destined to do for this world. The last dreaded enemy is to be conquered. Death and

hell are to yield up their prey—to be robbed of their spoils—and death and hell are to be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone. This earth is to be renovated and purified, and again become the abode of innocence and joy; the upright of all generations are to be congregated in one vast and holy assembly. Angels and saints are to be associated, and God himself come down and dwell with them. This will be the reign of universal holiness—the triumph of boundless benevolence—that will fill all holy beings with bliss supreme. Then shall the muse sing, “Time gone, the righteous saved, the wicked damned, and God’s eternal government approved.”



## LECTURE IV.

### THE BELIEVER'S FILIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

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“For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”—GALATIANS iii, 26.

IN the text and context, the apostle shows the superior excellency of the Gospel dispensation to that of the law. Those who were under it, were shut up to the faith which should afterward be revealed. It was but as a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. The blessings of Heaven, through the Gospel, are no longer confined to a single nation, but are offered to all. For there is neither Jew nor Greek; there is

neither bond nor free; there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. All true believers are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

I shall first consider the relationship of true believers to God, under the Gospel dispensation. I need not dwell upon the truth that believers are not the sons of God in the sense in which Jesus Christ is the Son of God—whose generation is ineffable; being one in nature, perfections, and glory, with the eternal Father. His relationship is natural and glorious. But—

1. In common with all other intelligent creatures of God, there is a relationship out of which originate many and binding obligations. In this respect, they have all one Father, and in a particular sense is He the Father of Spirits. In the intellectual powers, moral endowments, and immortality of the soul, man resem-

bles his glorious Creator—for upon these was originally impressed the true image of God. Angels are the sons of God; and in this they greatly rejoice. Adam was the first born son of God upon earth, and in his original, possessed the image of God, and in this consisted his chief happiness and glory; nay, the whole race of men is said to be the offspring of the great God; that is, they are His intellectual creatures, capable of bearing His image, and becoming partakers of the Divine nature by faith in the promises of the blessed Gospel: yet this natural relationship is not what is meant by the children of God in the text.

2. They are the children of God by their profession. In this sense, Israel is called His first born, and His son. “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called him my son out of Egypt.”—*Hosea* xi, 1. Yet one may

be His by profession, and still not be His in the sense of the text. There is more contemplated than the mere profession of christianity.

3. This sonship consists mainly in their being justified, regenerated, and adopted into the family of believers. Justification is the entitling act of God's grace, and changes the state, but not the nature; it gives title to all the privileges and blessings of the new covenant. Faith is the condition upon which this blessing is secured. Faith gives personal connection with Christ, whose righteous merit is the ground of a sinner's justification before God. Regeneration is the qualifying act of Divine grace, and is one of the blessings of the new covenant—and the sinner being justified, has a right to claim this qualifying act—it being one of the blessings to which he is entitled by the justifying grace of God.

Justification giving title to all the blessings of the new covenant, and this being one of these blessings, of course it gives title to this; hence the qualifying act follows invariably, and in quick succession the entitling act. Regeneration is a change of moral nature, conforming that to the image of God. There is, therefore, title and qualification for all the blessings of the new covenant. Whatever, therefore, is promised by the Gospel, is entitled by justification — and regeneration implants the principle by which it may be enjoyed. What therefore remains, is that this principle may be matured, and thus qualified for the fruitions of the heavenly state. Adoption is a legalizing act to membership in the family of God. Adoption neither changes the state nor the nature, but legalizes the heirship of the person whose state and nature were before changed by

the acts of justification and regeneration. By adoption, the justified and regenerated are constituted members of the family of God, and have right to all the privileges of the sons of God. These acts are all in quick succession, and so closely connected that the subject knows no difference as to time; yet, there must be a governmental order in the work of grace upon the heart and character of a sinner.

If adoption should be first, in that case you have a member of God's family with an unholy heart, and for sin condemned to hell—having neither title or qualification for any of the privileges of the sons of God. If regeneration should be first in order, then you have a sinner qualified for communion with God, but no title to enjoy it. The governmental order is first; justification, the entitling act; then regeneration, the qualifying act; then adoption, the legalizing act

of membership in the family of the redeemed. Although we may not be able to discern a difference in time or order, in these acts of divine grace, as they take place upon us in our salvation, yet as they are distinct acts, there must be an order in their process upon the sinner's heart, and this order must be as distinct in the divine mind as it would be in ours, if these acts occurred in our experience six, or even twelve months apart—and a separate and distinct impression was made by each. The work wrought in our hearts is a powerful work. We are justified, regenerated, and adopted, so nearly at the same time, that we are accustomed to regard the whole as one act of divine grace; but in matter of fact, they are three distinct acts; and hence we receive the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, FATHER. We are conformed to the image of God.



This resemblance is real, though greatly inferior to the original. Hence, God is not ashamed to be called our God; nor is Christ ashamed to call us brethren.

4. This relationship is not a mere title, or mark of distinction, but it has the most exalted privileges annexed to it. There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. They are His temple; He dwells in them, and supremely possesses their affections; they are led by His gracious Spirit, and they follow Him most willingly and cheerfully; they dwell in their Father's house, yea, in His abiding affection; and they have a title to incorruption, or a blessed resurrection. The body must die, but it—as well as the soul—is redeemed; it was the soul's habitation while here, and through the conduct of the spirit, was the instrument in the service of God, and by virtue of its union to Christ by the eter-

nal Spirit, God will raise it again. "But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you."—*Rom. viii, 11.* The resurrection of the children of God will be by virtue of the living and abiding union which subsists between them and Christ. They are born to an incorruptible inheritance. Though by nature they are children of wrath, yet, in virtue of the work of grace upon their hearts, they are heirs of eternal salvation, and an unchanging glory will follow. They are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Hence they have a goodly inheritance.

5. This relationship is equally the privilege of every believer in Christ. Ye are all the children of God, says the apostle. Believers may be distin-

guished from each other as to external circumstances in life, spiritual gifts, and graces; but their filial relationship is the same. The possessions of an earthly father are divided among his children by parcels, but the heavenly is not so divided; all is for each, and each enjoys all. Heaven complete belongs to each redeemed child of God. If, therefore, the resources of Godhead can constitute the soul happy, the redeemed soul will be happy.

6. It is a relationship of which they are now conscious, and hence they now enjoy the comfort of it. With holy confidence they cry, Abba, Father. "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." — *Gal.* iv, 6. All such delight in approaching, with a child-like confidence, the great God. They draw near to Him because He has pro-

mised that they shall obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Upon this rich fountain—as the redeemed children of God—they have a just claim, not, indeed, as sinners, or creatures, but as the adopted children of God, and as such, having right to all the privileges of the sons of God; hence they should come with boldness to the throne of the heavenly grace.

II. Consider how they attain this privilege and dignity. The text says, by faith in Christ Jesus. In illustrating this part of the subject, it may be proper to remember—

1. That in the state of primitive innocence, Adam was truly the son of God; bearing His image upon his moral nature, he resembled God; and hence he was His son in the proper sense of the term. But this resemblance was effaced by sin, and then his former re-

lationship to God, as His son, ceased, and he was hence turned out of His family and garden as a stranger, foreigner, and rebel, while he and his unnumbered progeny became children of disobedience and wrath. At the very moment that man dared to conceive sin in his bosom, God might have cut him down in that sin, and doomed him to hell forever; but to let him live and propagate his race, and then damn them for what he had done, we can not see the justice in the procedure, unless they have a personal offer of life and salvation, and reject that—then do they become the proper subjects of damnation. I conceive that the life and propagation of the race are the fruits of the eternal counsel of God conceived in Jesus Christ, and but for this, when Adam fell from primeval holiness, he would have fallen directly into hell; but this economy of

grace caught him as he fell, and rendered him and all his race the prisoners of hope. Hence God immediately revealed this purpose of grace to him in these words: "*The seed* of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." How precious the promise at this critical period—when all around him was darkness and death!

2. Only by faith in a supernatural revelation can we be informed how this high relationship of sons of God may be regained. A knowledge of this sublime truth surpasses the capacity of the wisest philosophers, and even of angels themselves; for they are represented by an apostle as desiring to look into this profound mystery. It is brought to light by the revelation from God alone. What a marvelous cluster of divine prodigies are brought to light by the Gospel of the grace of God. Here we learn the mission

and incarnation of the Son of God; His abject condition as a servant, under the grievous yoke of the law—himself a ransom for the slaves of sin; these slaves taken into fellowship with himself; and to them He grants the divine filiation of which I have treated in the first part of this discourse. An apostle says, “He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich.” In Jesus Christ, as a sacrifice for sin, Adam and his race have the personal offer of salvation; hence if any are now damned, it will be for rejecting the Saviour with all His divine offers of salvation. The law condemns all; the Gospel calls all, and if all reject Christ, all will be damned; but if part embrace Him and part reject Him, then that part which embraces Him will be saved, and that part which rejects Him will be damned. Faith in Christ is now the test



act of the sinner, as obedience was the test act of Adam. Faith in Christ is the obedience which the Gospel requires to secure this high relationship of which I have been treating. From the time this relationship is consummated, to our dying day, the evidence of its existence to the world, is holy obedience to the commands of God. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

3. We become the children of God when we cordially believe in Christ; we are hereby brought into union with Christ and into a dear relationship with God as His Father and ours. We are then born of God, and have Christ within us, as the principle of that eternal life which, as God's dear children, we are evermore to enjoy.

#### REFLECTIONS.

1. From the foregoing discourse, per-

mit me, dear reader, to address you in the language of an apostle. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the *children* [sons] of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; for he is our life; when he, therefore, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory.” There is such a connection between Christ and the believer as justifies this saying, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Be astonished, ye heavens and all ye hosts thereof, that such slaves to sin as are all the sons and daughters of Adam, should ever be taken into the family of God—rank in dignity with the angels of God,

who have ever beheld His face in the pure realms of bliss—and be partakers with them in the pure inheritance of Heaven. The immunities and glory of the adopted state are far beyond the descriptions of tongue or pen. It is an adoption procured at an infinite price, and it hence elevates to, a high honor—even that of being sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

2. You must not forget the love and obedience which this high relationship requires. If I be a Father—says God—where is mine honor? Should not this high honor, conferred upon you as a poor wandering rebel, reconcile you to the cross, though it should be never so heavy? It is the lot assigned by infinite wisdom, and He requires that you should bear it, as His dear children. This, too, is the way that you are to demonstrate to the world, your high origin, and your

connection with the royal family. Are you, indeed, of the same family, and have you the same Father? What a motive this, to influence you to love, as brethren; to be pitiful, and courteous, and kindly-affectioned one toward another; forbearing and forgiving one another; and thus evincing the true spirit of the great fraternity now in the heavenly inheritance. While mingled here with the children of this world, be watchful, lest ye imbibe their spirit, learn their ways and vices, stain your character, and become a scandal to your high profession. Remember, you have in your veins the royal blood of the heavenly family; and being washed in the blood of Jesus Christ from your sins, keep your garments unspotted from the world, that when the Son of man shall be revealed from Heaven to judge the world, you may be presented to Him without spot and blameless.

3. Subjects of this kind are generally insipid and dry, even to Gospel hearers. Had I been dwelling upon some political dogma, or describing to you the best means to secure large worldly possessions, you would read with undivided attention and deep solicitude. But I have been endeavoring to explain to you the riches of God's gracious adoption, and oh! how little you relish it. Blind, deluded sinner, what a fatal choice dost thou make! What, though thou hadst the wisdom of Solomon, the wealth of a Cræsus, the beauty of an Absalom, and were as high in authority and dignity as ever was Haman, if thou art not a child of God, with all thy advantages and dignity, thou shalt lie down in sorrow. And when Jesus Christ descends to judge the world in righteousness, thou shalt come forth from thy grave to hear thy final sentence, "Depart from me into

everlasting fire.” O! how that sentence will rend thy heart! O! hear in time! Come to Jesus. By faith receive Him as thy dear Saviour, that thou mayest in that day be found amongst the adopted children of God, and be forever blessed.

## LECTURE V.

### FINAL STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

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“And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.”—REVELATION xxii. 3, 4.

JOHN, in this connection, is giving a description of the New Jerusalem—its beauty, and blessedness; and these verses comprise his concluding remarks upon this sublime topic.

First: He shows what shall not be found there; there shall be no curse; no sin; no sinful persons; no sinful influences; nor shall there be any night



there; no ignorance; no error; no darkness; no temptation; there shall be no need of the light of the sun, nor of the moon; nor shall there be any need of the light of the Word; nor of the ordinances of the Gospel.

Second: He shows what shall be there. The throne of God and the Lamb; that is, the glorious and everlasting presence of God and Christ, as upon a throne of royal majesty; so that the city may be called JEHOVAH SHAMMAH—the Lord is there. It is added, His servants shall serve Him. Angels and glorified saints shall continually stand before Him, and administer to Him; they shall not hence spend their eternity in perpetually gazing upon His divine glories, but also in obeying His high commands with vigor; praising Him with cheerfulness; loving Him above measure; fearing Him without torment; trusting Him without de-

spondency; serving Him without weariness; and singing in heavenly strains the high sounding praises of God and the Lamb forever and ever. They shall see God face to face—which imports fruition, as well as vision. They shall have a sweet and satisfactory delight in Him and all His holy commands. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” That is, they shall have a clear and apprehending view of Him. His name shall be in their foreheads. His name—His holy image—impressed upon their moral nature, by which they shall be known, as a man is known by his name. They shall reign forever and ever; not for a thousand years, as the church on earth will reign with Christ after the destruction of anti-Christ, but they shall have eternal victory over all their enemies—Sin, Satan, and the World; yea, and Death itself

shall then be put under their feet. We may learn from this view of the subject, that when at any time we are dejected on account of our darkness and imperfect knowledge, afflicted by many wearisome nights and days of sin, sorrow, trouble, misery, temptation, or desertion, that the bright day is coming in the which there shall be no night, but an eternal Sabbath of rest, light, and life, with all conceivable blessedness. Even fullness of joy and rivers of pleasure for ever more. The Lord giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever. But to be more particular.

The resurrection of the dead will be attended by the general judgment—in which, great and small will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to hear their final sentence. There can be no doubt but there will be a visible appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, who will come

in great power and glory, and erect His throne of judgment in the clouds of Heaven. His ministers will be the angels, who will be sent forth to collect the redeemed from all countries and ages, whithersoever they have been scattered, and array them before the judge, preparatory to their receiving their last and final sentence.

Saints and sinners are here commingled in the common offices of life, and are connected by various ties; but then, they will be parted for ever. "Before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set his sheep on his right hand; but the goats on the left." — *Matt.* xxv, 32, 33. These words are commonly understood in a literal sense, as if the places named would be respectively occupied by the two classes

of mankind; but a little reflection may show us that we should not admit this interpretation. If the Son of man is to sit upon His throne in the clouds of Heaven, and the saints are to be caught up to meet Him in the air, the position of the two parties on the right and left hand can not be so easily admitted; and these expressions may hence be considered figurative. The place at the right hand—which will be assigned to the righteous—may be considered as representing the place of honor, which they will then occupy; for this is the general idea which that situation suggests in Scripture language; for you know that Christ is represented as sitting at the right hand of His Father, who has no right hand; yet, He has exalted Him far above principalities and power, and given Him a name above every other name.

John says: "The books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life."—*Rev.* xx, 12. Out of these books will the nations, small and great, be judged. It does not matter in what sense we understand these books; they will constitute the rule of judgment. To the law, as a rule of justification and condemnation, the saints are not amenable; for they have been delivered from it by our Lord Jesus Christ, and when they believed in Him, that act declared they ceased to seek righteousness by the law. The question will not hence be whether they have fulfilled or violated it, but whether they possess that precious faith which He has appointed to be the only means of obtaining the salvation of the Gospel. No such inquiry will be necessary for the satisfaction of the judge—who knows their hearts—and by His grace produced all

the good which will be found in them at the last great day. Yet, it will be necessary to answer the grand design of that day, the manifestation of His righteousness, and the rectitude of His decision in the final allotment of the human race. In this way, all will be convinced that it is not an arbitrary decision by the which Heaven is allotted to the one class and not to the other; and the assembled universe will see that the sentence is founded in reasons which accord with the rectitude of the divine administration; evidence will be exhibited of the validity of their title; and this evidence will be furnished by their works.—*Matt.* xxv, 34, 35. It is most manifest to every one who understands his Bible, that the works of the saints are here mentioned, not as the foundation of their faith or salvation, but as the evidence of it; and hence as the evidence of their



title to the joys of Heaven. If men are justified by faith, and not by works, then, it follows that the final sentence can refer to their works in no other sense than as proofs to all who may witness the decision, that they are the persons to whom the promise of eternal life belongs.

At this point, there is a very curious question often raised. Shall the particular sins of the saints be mentioned, as well as their good works? I shall not here stop to consider this question, as it is much more curious than profitable; and those who have attempted to explain this subject, have been greatly perplexed, and much divided. I shall only stop to say, that there can be no doubt but there will be a general reference to them, whether they are particularly named or not. God has certainly declared that He will bring every

work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.—*Ecl.* xii, 14. Justice, at least, seems to require that there should be an impartial review of the conduct of each individual; and it would seem—to call to review the sins of the saints—would but tend to magnify the grace of God, through which, they have been pardoned. But I must not go out upon this subject.

As I have before said, notwithstanding their now glorious state and appearance, it will be understood that they were once sinners, who deserved to die, but were redeemed by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it will be an important part of the transactions of the last day, to proclaim the sentence of their acquittal in the presence of angels and men. If their title to the favor of God, and the joys of Heaven, is often to them a subject of solicitude and even

doubt, in the present imperfect state, all their fears, doubts, and solicitude are dispelled either before they die; or if not, they will be for ever banished, as the spirit enters into the presence of God in the future state. I know that the ground on which the favor of God is sensibly enjoyed, is by many disputed, and the joy of communion with God is esteemed imaginary, and the faith of the righteous is derided as a foolish, presumptuous fancy, and the doctrine of imputed righteousness is pronounced the dream of a shadow. But the decisions of the last great day will put an end for ever to these suspicions and accusations. Who shall condemn those whom God has justified?

There are many other slanderous charges pronounced against the saints of the Most High, through ignorance or malice. It is true, indeed, that they may some-

times originate in mistake; yet there is a disposition, on the part of the ungodly, to adopt the charges from their prejudice against religion, and a desire to hold up such as make a profession of it, to contempt and ridicule: and I have no doubt but that the whole array of opposition against religion and religious people—on the part of ungodly men—originates in their secret hate to the pure principles of their holy christianity. We know what were the slanders of both Jews and Gentiles, against Christians in the primitive church: it appears, from history, that these have been repeated, or new ones invented, in all succeeding ages; and the same spirit yet prevails, as is seen from the opprobrious epithets with which the true disciples of Christ are branded, such as precisians, puritans, methodists, enthusiasts, fanatics, and hypocrites. These terms are applied to them

because they have imbibed the spirit and act under the influence of that system of religion which even their enemies profess to respect. But the final sentence will vindicate the righteous, and cause the infamy to rest upon those who have slandered them perhaps a thousand times. Then shall we see the following declaration in all the majesty of fulfillment: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise in judgment against thee, thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—*Isa. liv, 17.* Such is, and such will continue to be, the decision of God concerning the righteous and the wicked.

The day of judgment having passed, and the righteous having been openly acknowledged and acquitted, they shall make their triumphant entry into the

place destined for their reception. "These shall go away into everlasting life." The place is called Heaven, by which we understand that region of the universe in which angels and the spirits of just men made perfect now dwell, and all the righteous shall hereafter be assembled. Where this place is situated, we shall not stop to inquire—for the inquiry would be but a fruitless speculation. All our ideas about its situation are vague, and with all, very uncertain. There is only one thing, so far as I know, that we may warrantably conclude, and that is, that it lies beyond the visible creation; for Jesus Christ, who is now in it, is said to have ascended "above all heavens;" that is, above the ærial heavens, and the starry heavens, according to the Jewish division of the superior regions. That Heaven is a place, I think we have no reason

to doubt. It appears to me, therefore, that it is an imaginary refinement to consider it merely as a state. I do not pretend to deny but that God can make any place Heaven, by there revealing himself; but would the fact that He reveals himself in any place, destroy the identity of the place, and so render it a nonentity? Wherever, therefore, God may reveal himself, and communicate the fullness of His love, may be considered a heavenly place. But upon this subject, our business is not with abstract speculations and scholastic refinements about the power of God, but with the declarations of His Word. The Bible uniformly supposes that there is a particular place called Heaven, which is appointed to be the final abode of the righteous. There have been curious, and I may say, idle speculations, about the place of spirits; and whether—as they are not material, and can not like bodies



be confined within definite limits—places can be predicated of them; but there is no occasion, upon this subject, for us to perplex ourselves with the arguments on either side, because the saints in the future state will be clothed upon with material bodies. It must hence be a material place, for at this moment there are material bodies in it. Where is the body of Enoch, of Elijah, and of Christ? This place—be it what it may, and where it may—is the place which will be inhabited by the millions of our race who shall be redeemed from under the whole heavens.

Concerning the nature of the place, we can form no adequate conceptions. All the descriptions of it which we have in the Bible, are, without doubt, figurative. We know that some portions of our earth display scenes of astonishing grandeur and consummate beauty; yet Heaven will

be inconceivably superior to what the world was before its beauty had been defaced by the curse following the transgression. And we may very rationally suppose that it will be totally different from the earth, because the beings who inhabit it are entirely changed; and although they are men, yet, their bodies will be very different from what they are in the present state. John, indeed, tells us in his revelations, that a river flows through it, and that trees grow upon the banks thereof. Yet, by a literal interpretation of this language of the apostle, the whole subject would be degraded. The ideas suggested are those of beauty, refreshment, and abundance. It is again presented to us under the notion of a city of pure gold, the foundations and gates thereof are of precious stones. "And the city has no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in

it; for the glory of God did light it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there.” — *Rev.* xxi, 23–5. All that we can here say, is, that in Heaven there will be visible tokens of the presence of God. Upon earth He manifests himself, not only by impressions upon the minds of His intelligent creatures, but by displays of His perfections in the splendor of the heavens, and the various processes which are going on above us and around us. We may believe, therefore, that in Heaven He will manifest himself, both by a secret intercourse with the souls of the saints, and by such external signs as will show that He is near, and that this is His temple and place of

His glory. Who, let me ask, can conceive the majesty or the glory of the place which He has chosen for His peculiar residence? Here all the magnificence and beauty which we admire in the universe, will be united with the magnificence and beauty of which we can at the present form no adequate ideas. It will be the noblest work of the Almighty hand; and this will be Heaven—the final abode of the saints of the living God.

Let us here stop and inquire whether the saints in Heaven will know each other when surrounded with all the ineffable glories of the place:—and one should think that such an inquiry was unnecessary, as the answer at once suggests itself to the mind of every man. A doubt upon this subject could only have occurred to some dreaming theologian, who, in his airy speculations, soared far

beyond the bounds of reason and common sense. Who, let me ask, with his Bible in hand, can doubt whether saints in Heaven will know each other? What reason can be given why they should not? Would it be any part of their perfection to have all their former ideas obliterated, and to meet in Heaven as strangers? Would this view of the subject give us a more favorable opinion of the general assembly and Church of the first born? Shall we suppose this assembly to consist of an innumerable number of strangers who never hold any communion with each other, or by some inexplicable restraint, are prevented, amidst an intimate intercourse, from making mutual discoveries? Or shall we suppose that they have forgotten what they themselves were, so that they can not reveal it to their associates? What, I ask, would be gained by this state of ignorance?

There can be no rational answer to this question. But we can very readily conceive what would be lost. They would lose all the happiness of meeting again, on the peaceful shore, those from whom they were separated by the storms of life; of seeing amongst the trophies of divine grace, many of whom they had despaired, and for whose sake they had gone down to the grave in sorrow; of knowing the good they have been honored to do, and being surrounded by the individuals who had been saved by means of their prayers and labors of love. How could those whom the minister of the Gospel had been the means, in the hands of God, in converting, and building up in the holy faith, be to him a crown of joy and rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus, if he did not recognize them when standing at his side? The saints will be free from the turbulence of passion; but their innocent

affections will remain. Could parents spend eternal ages in the supreme blessedness of Heaven without asking, are our children here—are they with us in this glorious abode? I do not suppose that the relationships formed in this world—which were the means of consolidating human society—will have anything to do with the happiness of the saints in Heaven, such as husband and wife, parents and children; yet, I have no doubt but that we shall have a great desire to know whether or not they are in this glorious place of rest and happiness; and I have as little doubt but that we shall know. The relationships upon which I suppose the social happiness of Heaven is based, are founded upon a common descent (naturally, we are all brethren), and our all being redeemed by the same precious blood, there is hence a natural, and a gracious relationship subsisting between



the saints of God. Upon these, their social happiness is based. I am of the opinion that there will be no strangers in that world of supreme delight; but that we shall not only know and recognize our intimate friends in our associations upon earth, but every blessed inhabitant amongst the saints of God. Love founded upon the redeeming power of divine grace, will be the exorcise which will consolidate the social society of the heavenly world. I have no doubt, but amidst the supreme delights of the heavenly state, we shall pause to inquire—Are our friends, with whom we took sweet counsel, and with whom we walked to the house of God, and with whom we traveled until death separated us—safely landed in this abode of transcendent blessedness?

Again. It is supposed by those who deny the personal knowledge and social

enjoyments of the heavenly state, that the saints will be so absorbed in the contemplation and enjoyment of God, that they will not need the society of others, and that they will be insensible to their presence—so that when we consign their bodies to the silent tomb, that this is the last we shall ever see or know of them. O how gloomy! O how sorrowful such a thought! Shall I never see or know my dear friends again? While I would acknowledge, and greatly delight to acknowledge, that God is sufficient to the happiness of His creatures, and delight to concur in the sentiment that He is the chief, the supreme good, I can not suffer myself to be carried away by imposing sounds, and thus permit myself to be deprived of the pleasing reflection that when I get to Heaven I shall meet my dear friends, and know and recognize them.

The question with which we have to do, is, What kind of a Heaven has God promised to His people, and what kind of a Heaven is suitable to the nature of man? With respect to the latter part of this question, I may be permitted to remark, that, although the present relations which subsist amongst mankind—father and son, husband and wife—are dissolved at death, and may not be renewed; yet, as I have before said, the general relation of a common descent, and a common nature, strengthened by the relation arising out of a common redemption, will remain; and the love, *too*, implied in these relationships, will remain. I know human nature will be exalted and purified, and in this knowledge, I greatly rejoice; but then it will not be essentially changed. Without such a change, however, we could not conceive its present tendency to union and fellow-

ship with others, to cease. Unless, therefore, man should become something totally different from what he now is, he could not be perfectly happy in a state of solitude. It is, indeed, true—according to the hypothesis—that all his desires would be concentrated upon his MAKER as his chief good; but before we can admit this assumption, we must be assured that his instinctive desire for communion with his equals will, in the future state, be extinguished; or more plainly, that he will receive a new constitution. If love for his fellow men should remain, it would, according to the hypothesis, be superfluous and utterly useless: a power preserved but never to be exercised. What idea can any one form of the family of God in Heaven, consisting of insulated individuals, of brothers connected in the most intimate bonds, but holding no communion?

With reference to the other branch of this question, which relates to the kind of Heaven God has promised to His people, you know that it is positively represented as a state of society. And how could it enter into any sane mind to conceive of it in any otherwise? Are not its inhabitants the identical persons who were congregated into one body here on earth, and united in the same faith, love, and worship? And why, when they are assembled again in the sanctuary above, should they be supposed immediately to separate, that each may dwell in his own recess through an eternal duration, like the solitaries of the desert? Revelation does not so describe the final state of the righteous. "In my Father's house," said Christ, "are many mansions." What a wild imagination must it be which would suppose that those mansions are to be inhabited by indi-

viduals living in a state of absolute solitude! The natural suggestion is that of rest, peace, and comfort—society and friendship. Heaven is furnished with every accommodation; all those social enjoyments which we usually find in a house, will exist there; and that, too, in their highest possible perfection. It is the place where all the children of God will finally meet, as the members of a human family, who were separated during the day, and scattered abroad in pursuit of their various employments, assemble in the evening around their common family hearth; so the children of God will, at last, assemble around the throne of God, and unite their songs of praise to Him as their dear Father. John represents them as standing before the throne; but we must not suppose that they stand there as units composing the aggregate number, without any



other tie than that of juxtaposition. They are further represented as engaged in the same service of adoration and thanksgiving. It is not the song of each for himself, but the song of the multitude of the redeemed, which will be heard in the celestial temple. "After this, I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying, salvation unto our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." — *Rev.* vii, 9, 10. There, they who went to the house of God in company will meet; and there, they who never met before, will meet as dear brethren, and recognize each other as saved by the precious blood of our Lord Jesus Christ from the ruined race;



and instantly they will be united by the sanctified affections of the heavenly state in the social and triumphant song of redeeming love. My soul exults in contemplating the scenes, the society, and the rapture of the heavenly state.

Let us now turn our thoughts to the employment of the heavenly state. It has been represented as praise. And who can doubt the representation? It certainly is just. Every one will feel his supreme obligations to divine grace, and will, moreover, experience ineffable delight in ascribing the glory of his salvation to God and the Lamb, for his present glorified state. Whether there will be vocal praise in Heaven, can not be fully determined from the figurative language of the Bible; but that it will be vocal, does not seem improbable, as in that state the saints will have bodies, and so we may readily conclude that

they will have all the appropriate organs fitted for the purposes of vocal praise in its most elevated character. Yet we may not suppose that praise will be their only employment. They will serve God day and night in His temple. But there are other ways in which a part of this service may be performed. They will have minds to contemplate, as well as hearts to love; and why may we not conclude that a portion of their happy existence will be devoted to the survey of the glorious manifestations of His perfections, and the review of His wonderful works? They will be surrounded by their redeemed brethren; and will they not enter into conversation upon subjects in which they are all equally interested? Will they not listen with great delight to each other's history, and feel their hearts glow with admiration and love, while in every new relation there are

new discoveries of the Divine goodness and wisdom? But upon this subject I speak as a child would of the actions of a man, and with still less certain knowledge, only in so far as I am guided by the sublime oracles of God's inspiration. We are ignorant, we can not tell whether language will be used in Heaven as the vehicle of thought, or some new medium of communication will be established. We understand still less the manner in which intercourse will be maintained between men—who have bodily senses and organs—and angels who are incorporeal. But, one thing is certain: angels and men will be united in one holy society, and will dwell together in perfect friendship, receiving and communicating happiness one to another, and fervently loving each other, and eternally united in pouring unceasing praises to HIM who is worthy of all praise.

But the happiness of the saints in the heavenly state will not arise solely from the nature of the place, and the company with whom they are associated. As man's chief end is to glorify God, so his chief happiness will be to enjoy Him forever. This, I think, is the judgment of all regenerated men; and Heaven is the object of their hope, because in that place, their desires for His presence, and the full communication of His love, will be gratified. "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on earth whom I desire besides thee."—*Psalms* lxxiii, 25. And our Saviour has declared, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." There is no real contradiction between this language and the language of Paul, when he says, "Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who

only hath immortality, dwelling in the light, which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen or can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting.”—

1 *Tim.* vi; 15, 16. The one speaks of mental, and the other of corporeal vision. As God is a Spirit, as such, He has never been seen by mortal eyes; nor can He thus be seen. The appearances of Him, mentioned in the Scriptures of truth, are only symbols and sensible forms of His presence, assumed for the time. For the same reason, no man will see Him, *even* in the future state; for we should recollect, that although the bodies of saints will be highly refined, they will still be material; and it is physically impossible that a spirit should be discerned by material organs. Jesus Christ will be seen in the future state, and He will be seen, because He is clothed upon with human nature; but

the eternal Father dwells amidst inaccessible light. Nor is it inconsistent with what I have already said, to suppose a visible manifestation of His glory, similar to that which appeared in the most holy place, or the representation made to Moses, when the Lord passed by him, and proclaimed his name; because this would not be God himself, but only a sign of His presence.

The saints will perceive God with their minds; that is, they will obtain knowledge clear and comprehensive when compared with their present imperfect knowledge, which they derive from His works and Word. "Now," says Paul, "we know in part, and prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know



even as also I am known.”—1 *Cor.* xiii, 9–12. Strong as is this language, it must not be understood as an adequate knowledge; for an Infinite Being can only be understood by an Infinite Mind. But the knowledge of the saints in the future state, will be comparatively perfect; it will be free from doubts and error, and much more extensive than it is possible for them to attain in the present imperfect state. In the present state, our progress is slow, and impeded by many obstacles. There, knowledge will be infused into the mind without the operose process of instruction and mutual assistance. Here, our views are limited; and it is only possible for us to see the outskirts of the divine glory. There, the revelation will be as ample as our finite capacities will allow. What the saints learn here, will shine with increased luster, and present itself to their minds with



an evidence and satisfaction which here they could never realize; and many things will be disclosed to them which it had not entered into their hearts to conceive. Mysteries will be explained; difficulties will be solved; and excellencies will rise to view in the Divine nature, of which no vestage was discoverable in His works. How glorious will He appear when every veil is removed, and He is contemplated in all the fullness of His attributes! The sight will be transporting, and it can but fill the saints with the highest admiration and supreme delight. Nor do I apprehend that the knowledge of the saints in Heaven will be stationary; nor can I, unless I could conceive them as having sought out the Almighty to perfection. It is possible, indeed, that although it is now progressive, it may arrive at a point beyond which it is destined not to proceed;

at least, we could not prove this opinion to be absurd. The soul might acquire, on its first entrance into Heaven, or on its re-union with the body at the last day, all the knowledge of which it was capable; and this being sufficient for its happiness, there might be no further expansion of its faculties. But we naturally judge of the future state by the present; and finding that the soul now advances from step to step, we are led to anticipate its perpetual progress. There can be no doubt but that the will of the great Creator can indefinitely enlarge its powers; and that, in the infinitude of His nature, there will be new discoveries to be made forever and ever. In the course of an eternal duration, all the wonders of creation may be surveyed, however wide in its extent and numerous in its parts; but HE, in comparison with whom, it is as nothing, can

never be fully comprehended and understood.

While the saints contemplate the character and perfections of God in the future state with their increased knowledge and growing perfections, they will love and admire the eternal source of unbounded goodness. The knowledge of God in the future world will hence be attended with love, intense, supreme love. In this world, the saints prefer God to their chief joy; and there are seasons when their hearts go out to Him with an ardor which no created object, however dear, can excite, with a desire for the closest union and the most intimate fellowship. But this flame will glow more ardently in the pure atmosphere of Heaven. Here, the love of the saints has to struggle with the infirmities of the flesh; the reluctance of corrupt nature; the operations of selfishness; the opposing

influences of visible things, by which the senses and the imagination are so powerfully affected; but, then free and unconfin'd, it will be concentrated upon its objects with ineffable delight. Man—brought back from his wanderings into the immediate presence of his Father—will indeed love Him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength; nor will the fervor of his affection ever cease—for there will never anything occur to suspend it or turn it into a different channel. God will always maintain the pre-eminence, and will appear infinitely greater and better than all other beings; and his love to other beings will be in perfect harmony with supreme love to God, and all that affection which he feels for others will flow from this exalted source, and will be attracted by His image, as impressed upon them in its loveliness and glory. In Heaven there will be a union

of the most intimate kind subsisting between God and redeemed souls—such a union as is effected by the purest and most active mutual love; and the saints will be one with Him in a higher sense than we at present are able to conceive. There will not be even a momentary opposition of desires and interests. They will rejoice in God as He is, and all their powers will be devoted to Him alone. Upon Him their thoughts will be constantly fixed, and in communion with Him, their never-failing joy will consist. “Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.”—1 *Cor.* xiii, 8. But love never fails. It is adapted to every condition of our nature, and constitutes its moral perfection. “Now, abideth faith, hope, charity, LOVE, these three; but the greatest of these is

LOVE.”—1 *Cor.* xiii, 13. In the world to come, faith will be unnecessary, because its object will be seen, and hope’s object will be possessed. Faith, hence, will terminate in vision, and hope in possession; but LOVE is the grace which will live and reign while God and immortality shall endure. From what has already been said, it is most manifest that the saints in their future state will be supremely happy. But for a more full illustration of this subject, we may consider that it will be increased by the absence of all causes of pain and sorrow, to the operation of which they are at present exposed; from the presence of the highest good, and from the certainty of its perpetual possession.

“There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.”—*Rev.* xxi, 4. Sin and



suffering are connected as cause and effect. But all the inhabitants of Heaven are sinless, and consequently are no longer subject to those sufferings which are the just punishments of sin, and in the present state are necessary to check the wayward disposition of sinful men, and to awaken them to repentance. There will be no disease or pain of body; no anxiety of mind; no fear; no regret; no disappointments; no unsatisfied wishes; no restlessness and discontent; no seasons of melancholy and depression; no broken friendships; no envy and jealousy; no distressing sympathies; no separation from those we love. Affliction, when it now passes over the mind, sometimes makes deep furrows, which time does not erase. But in Heaven there will be no trace of past sorrows in the hearts of the saints; no wounds still bleeding, or so slightly healed that a touch opens them again.



Remembering all the evils which befel them in this sublunary state; all the sad scenes which they witnessed; all the losses which they sustained; all the agonies which they endured, their minds will be smooth and placid as the bosom of a lake when not a breeze moves upon it. Reflection upon the past will serve only to heighten the contrast and to give them a more lively feeling of their present enjoyment. Who can conceive the calm of the heavenly state, where no tempest blows, and the sound of lamentation is not heard; where no qualms of conscience are felt, and not even a transient thought disturbs the serenity of the soul; where every emotion and every reflection is delightful, and all within and without is bliss. They to whom death made this world a blank, and who went down into the grave mourning because they were bereaved, mourn no more, having found

those whom they bewailed, or far better friends. They have no other will than the will of God; and those whom He does not love, have ceased to be the objects of their affections. "God himself shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

They are not only exempt from all evil, but they are put in possession of all good; and this good is not merely the perfection of their own nature, or the resources of their own enlightened understandings. But it is God himself who is their everlasting portion and their exceeding great reward. The soul having wandered from him, finds no rest upon earth; nor would it find it in Heaven were not God there. The happiness of man in Paradise was the favor of his Creator; and this will constitute his supreme happiness in his future state when fully recovered from his aberration from

God. How, I ask, could man be happy in a state of separation from his Maker—the only supreme source of happiness to an immortal soul? You might as soon suppose that a tree could live and flourish when cut off from all connection with the elements which are appointed to nourish it. The rational creature abandoned of God would wither and die, like the vegetable creation when the rain and dew of Heaven are withheld. The wicked will be miserable—not so much on account of the place to which they are consigned, for the Divine presence and favor could make even a prison a Paradise—as because they will see God afar off, being banished from His gracious presence, and separated from Him by an impassable gulf. It is the presence and favor of God which makes Heaven the seat of overwhelming rapture and delight.

In Heaven the saints see Him as He is, and hold intimate, uninterrupted, and everlasting communion with Him. Surely He who made the soul has access to it, and may reveal himself to it so as to produce its highest felicity. The joy which we at present experience from pious meditation, or from the contemplation of nature, and the participation of the blessings which it supplies, is to be traced to Him as viewed in these pious reflections: and this shows us that He can make the faculties of the soul, and the organs of the body, vehicles of supreme blessedness. When, therefore, He shall no longer withhold His hand, but pour out upon the objects of His favor, blessings in profusion, their most ample desires will be gratified, and their highest expectations surpassed. If the saints upon earth triumph because they can say, "The Lord is the portion of our inheri-

tance," how much greater will be their exultation when they know the full value of their portion—the boundless nature of their inheritance! God himself will be their own God. He who is all fair, and all good; to whom all perfection belongs, and of whose transcendent excellence this beautiful universe is but a shadow, He will be theirs, and will bless them forever: He will be to them all, and in all, around them, and within them, the light of their understanding, the joy of their heart, and the object of their eternal praise and triumph.

Permit me to observe, again, that this, their state of happiness, will be greatly increased by the knowledge that it shall be endless. In Heaven there will be no apprehension of evil: this disturbs our best hours upon earth, and is excited partly by the suggestions of conscience, and partly by our experience of the vicis-

situdes of human affairs. Here, therefore, we rejoice with trembling; and often in our most cheerful moments we are visited with unwelcome forebodings of a change. Who can say, without presumption, "To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant"? The joys of religion are equally subject to mutation, as those of a temporal nature; either because the saints are not at all times disposed to receive them, and by the unhappy influence of unbelief, they are excluded from their souls; or because God is pleased to suspend them for the purpose of trying their faith. The state of Heaven is totally different. The duration of all created beings is progressive, and is made up of moments following each other in perpetual succession; but that of the saints in Heaven will bring no change of circumstances, and may be compared to the duration



of the sun and stars, which from age to age are fixed in the same point of space, and shine with undiminished splendor. Eternity will then have commenced, which, as it flows on, carries all things along in a uniform, uninterrupted stream of bliss or misery. The very possibility of an end would mar the felicity of the saints, even in Heaven. Their joy would be suspended while the question would be asked: Will this state of happiness be of ceaseless duration? The doubt necessarily included in this question, would cause fear to pass as a shadow over the soul, and hence it could but dim the surrounding scenery. Still more fatal would be the effect, if there were positive grounds to suspect that their joy would come to an end. The idea of annihilation—from which nature recoils—would be doubly terrible. Who could brook the thought of losing life



in its highest state of perfection; of closing his eyes on the transcendent beauties and glory of Heaven, never to behold it more; of sinking into eternal insensibility after ages of rapturous bliss? But it is an eternal redemption which the saints of God shall enjoy. The last change which they shall undergo, is at death; or, if you please, at the resurrection—when the separate spirits shall again be embodied. Then shall they enter upon a career which shall never terminate. Ages will run on more rapidly than hours amongst mortals; but thousands of years will take nothing from their felicity. God has made them by His gift what He himself is in His own ineffable nature; and of them, as well as of himself, it may be said, their years shall have no end. “There is no night there.” “The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give

light unto thee: but the LORD shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the LORD shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended." — *Isaiah* lx, 19, 20.

Whether there will be different degrees of glory in the future state, is a question much more curious than profitable; and it is hence a matter of small moment on which side of this question we take our stand, since all the saints of God will be perfectly happy. The prize set before each individual, is of incalculable value, and hence worthy of the highest possible effort, that each may attain to it. The prize is Heaven. Is it worth possessing? If it is worth anything, it is worth everything. When, dear reader, you and I shall have fought, and con-

quered, then shall we possess the immortal prize, and with God's sacramental host join in rapturous song to praise the Rock of our salvation.

## LECTURE VI.

### THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD BY MEANS OF THE GOSPEL.

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“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain. And it shall come to pass, *that* from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.”—ISAIAH lxvi, 22, 23.

THE conversion of the world to christianity, is the most desirable and glorious event to which the mind of man can aspire. For the achievement of this work, the noblest endowments of the mind, and the richest gifts of a benignant Providence, should be put into requisition.

Other objects, it is true, fill a larger space in the eye of the public—and much more engage the attention of the great mass of men. This may emphatically be styled the age of great and noble enterprise. Improvements in political science, in education, in agriculture, in manufactures, in navigation, in the typographic art, and in the means of inland transportation, have advanced, in our day, with an unparalleled success. Every genuine philanthropist can but rejoice in all these improvements, which promote the comfort and convenience of this life; but when we compare them with the enterprise now under consideration, they dwindle into insignificance. For, when all these arts have been brought to a state of perfection, they leave untouched the CORE of the evil by which mankind have been chiefly afflicted. Man's worst disease is of a

moral nature, and can only be reached by moral means and remedies. The Gospel of the grace of God is, in fact, the only remedy to the multitudinous evils with which our race is, and has been, afflicted. Human society, it is true, may be refined and embellished by other means, but the moral character of man can not be meliorated, nor his substantial happiness promoted effectually in any other way than by cordially embracing the Gospel of Christ. What a blessed change may be produced upon uncivilized nations—simply by the Gospel—is now manifest to the world by the labors of missionaries in the Society and Sandwich Islands, in South Africa, in India, and amongst the tribes of our own Indians. Men opposed to the Gospel may affect to undervalue the results of these missionaries; but in the eyes of all impartial judges, a truly won-

derful work has been accomplished. Let objectors show, if they can—but this is impossible—any such reformation of human character by any other means. But it may be asked, Why does not the Gospel reform the wicked lives of Christians, if it possesses such a salutary efficacy? To which I answer, that it does, just in so far as it is cordially embraced—although from the circumstances of the case, it is not so apparent, as in the conversion of men from the abominations of idolatry. Only let the Gospel be cordially embraced and obeyed by all nominal Christians, and the whole face of society would be immediately changed. Piety, purity, benevolence, peace, justice, harmony, and friendship, would then be predominant; and those innumerable evils which now deform and disgrace human character, would disappear. Such a change in the moral condition of man,



it is true, would subvert, or render useless, many institutions, now deemed useful, and even necessary. The whole expensive machinery of war would at once be annihilated. The capricious prisons and penitentiaries of the whole country would be converted into a nobler purpose than the confinement of human beings. Even the courts of justice and halls of legislation would be, in a great measure, deserted. The traveler, in passing through the streets of our large and beautiful cities, would not see splendid theaters—those haunts of vice and wickedness—rising up on every side; but their places would be supplied by schools of useful learning, and churches dedicated to the worship of the eternal God. The universal prevalence of the spirit of evangelical piety, would not, as some suppose, render men unsociable and gloomy. There would be, indeed, less of that

frothy, noisy mirth, which can not bear reflection; but much more solid peace and contentment; pleasures more elevated and pure: yea, an hundred fold more true and rational delights. It is hence an event most devoutly to be desired—and one for which every Christian should most ardently pray—that the whole world should be brought speedily under the influence of the Gospel of the grace of God.

The conversion of the world is a most certain event. If we may rely upon the Bible as a revelation from the God of Heaven—and therefore divinely true—this event is certain: for there is no truth in it that it reveals with more distinct clearness. The Gospel shall be preached to all nations. The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ. The fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved. The heathen shall be

given to Messiah for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. The glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. The time shall arrive when there shall no longer be any need for one to say to another, know ye the Lord; for all shall know Him, from the least even to the greatest. The event is most certain—for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. But when it shall occur, is to us very uncertain. It is not for us to know the times and seasons that the Father hath put in His own power. Like the day of judgment—which as to the event is most certain, yet as to the time is unknown to the noblest created intelligence—so the precise time for the commencement of the latter day glory is hid from all men. Some so interpret the prophecies, as to teach that that day will not arrive until a day of dreadful

darkness and persecution shall almost overwhelm the Church of Christ; while others are sanguine in the opinion that the dark period is already past, and that we are now in the dawn of the millenium. But neither the one nor the other of these sets of interpreters have been able to confirm their opinions by such solid reasons as to command our unqualified assent; and it may be, that it would not be favorable to the active efforts of the Church if the precise time of Zion's glory should be fully known to her. Absolute certainty of the near approach, or of the great distance of this event, might have the effect to paralyze the energies of the Church, by leading to the neglect of the appropriate means in the first instance, from excess of confidence; and in the latter, by despair of success.

The conversion of the world—occur

when it will—must be brought about by human agency. The means of accomplishing it are already in the hands of the Church. There does not appear to be any absolute need again to resort to miracles in order to achieve this mighty result; hence there is good reason to believe, that there will not be any miraculous interposition to bring it about. This world must, it will be, converted through the instrumentality of the ministry of reconciliation: such, at least, is the intimation contained in the commission given to the apostles by our Lord Jesus Christ. The heralds of the cross will go into every nation under the whole heavens, and preach the unsearchable riches of Gospel grace to every creature. Their sound shall go out through all the earth; and Jesus Christ, according to His word of promise, will be with them always, even to the end of the world, giving

efficiency and power to the Gospel of His grace.

This duty of carrying the Gospel to all nations, has been incumbent upon the Church in all ages; but thus far, it has been greatly neglected. Now, this duty devolves upon the friends of Christ, and it behooves Christians—all Christians—to ponder well their responsibilities to Christ, and the souls of their fellow men of the present generation. The salvation of the world seems to be, in some sort, suspended on the part that the Church shall act in regard to this momentous subject; and for her encouragement, it may be said, that although we can not with certainty predict the day, or even the year, when the Jews will be restored, and the fullness of the Gentiles shall come in, yet we may say with confidence, that when, in the exercise of lively faith and fervent prayer, the Church



shall put forth all her energies, and faithfully and perseveringly employ all the means which God has put into her hands, then, indeed, shall Zion arise and shake herself from the dust, and her righteousness shall go forth as brightness, and her salvation as a lamp that burneth; then shall Jerusalem put on her beautiful garments, and become the joy of the whole earth.

Although our Lord will not have us indulge a prying curiosity respecting the times and seasons, yet He would have us be vigilant in “observing the signs of the times”—just as men are accustomed to observe the aspect of the heavens, that they may judge of the weather. It will not be thought amiss if I shall now spend a moment in considering what are some of these signs—as they will indicate the near approach of the predicted day of universal grace.



One thing which must unquestionably precede this event, is the preparation of suitable instruments to accomplish the work. Men of the right spirit must be trained and disciplined for the service of the Lord, in sufficient numbers, to bear the message of salvation to every nation under the whole heavens of the Lord. At present, therefore, it is evident to all, that we are not prepared to carry the commission of our Lord into full effect, because we have not the necessary instruments in sufficient numbers. But if the Great Head of the Church intends that she shall achieve anything great in this glorious work, her attention will be turned to the business of searching out and training up young men for the ministry with great earnestness. This will be felt by all Christians to be a most important and solemn duty; and no promising candi-

date for the sacred office will be prevented from prosecuting his preparatory studies for the want of the necessary means. It will be a favorable sign of approaching good, when the number of faithful Gospel ministers is multiplied.

But not only must the number, but the qualifications of ministers be increased. When God is about to accomplish a great and noble work upon earth, men of the right spirit will be raised up, as were the apostles and martyrs; men who will not count their own lives dear, nor be unwilling to seal their testimony with their blood, if the cause of truth and the honor of their Lord should require it. Indeed, it is not reasonable to expect that the conversion of the world should be achieved without the shedding of blood. The grand adversary of God and man will not relinquish his government of the world—that he has so long

held in bondage — without a struggle. Whenever the same spirit which actuated the apostles and martyrs, and all the ministers of the primitive Church, shall animate the ministers and missionaries of the Gospel — and when the strong holds of sin begin to fall before their spiritual weapons — Satan will come forth to the contest with horrible rage; and the more, because he will know that his time is short. Know then, that as soon as ministers are multiplied, and they shall generally possess a full spirit of devotion to the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ, and shall willingly offer themselves to the most perilous and arduous services, so that when the inquiry is made, Who will go for us to heathen or Mohammedan lands? the response will no longer be feeble, but a host will present themselves, saying, Here we are, send us. Then will there be good reason to suppose

that the triumph of the Church draweth near.

It will be a sign for good when Christians generally shall feel deeply and tenderly for the salvation of their fellow men. There are two grand defects among Christians, which cause this time of glory to linger: they are, want of love to Christ and the truth; and love to man. This last is not so much noticed as it should be: we are too easily satisfied; we content ourselves with a sort of negative goodness in regard to this point; if we bear no malice to our race, if we do nothing positively injurious to them, we seem to think we have done our duty; whereas, the law of God requires that we love our neighbor as ourselves: and our Saviour teaches, that every man, of whatever nation, or religion, on whom we can confer a favor, is our neighbor. The heathen, thence, are our neighbors, whom

we are to love as ourselves; the Jews and Mohammedans are our neighbors, and if in our power—according to the law to which reference is had—we are to do them good. The time will come when Christians will feel this truth upon their hearts daily; it will occupy their thoughts, and engage their unceasing prayers to Almighty God for their salvation. They will often speak one to another upon this great and momentous subject, and will, with deep solicitude, inquire, What can we do to rescue our fellow men from imminent ruin? If funds are needed for this purpose, there will be no disposition to withhold them when the Lord hath need for them; and they may aid in the salvation of immortal souls from eternal damnation, and bring them to everlasting life. Indeed, when Christians come to feel this subject as they should—and will ere long feel it—

no sacrifice of time, money, or ease, will be considered anything in comparison of the momentous object which will then occupy their minds. There will be no longer any need for earnest and pathetic solicitations to obtain the necessary funds for carrying on this work, for the people will make free-will offerings in such abundance, that it will be necessary to make proclamation, as in the camp of Israel, that the people stay their hands, because there is already enough, and more than enough.

In the text, we have an intimation of the permanent glory of the organization of the Church. It is called "new heavens and new earth," as also the spirit of devotion that shall prevail in the Church, and the promptitude with which the people shall attend upon the institutions thereof. The final success of the Gospel is referred to by the prophet.



“All flesh shall come to worship before the Lord.” This will be a time of universal happiness, as it will be a time of universal holiness.

It will be a time of universal peace, as the God of peace will reign universal Lord. The spirit of war is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The prevalence of this peace is based upon universal love to God and man. These are the great principles which actuate good men in all their active efforts in the cause of Christ. If we love the world, our ease, or our carnal comforts, more than we love the cause of Christ, this state of things will long linger, and we give evidence that the love of the Father is not in us.

It will be a time of universal joy, as the pure principles of the Gospel shall have universally obtained. A universal shout of joy shall go up to the Lord for



the complete success of the Gospel of the grace of God. It is, therefore, a time of universal victory, and a fit representation of that glory which shall follow. The universal prevalence of the Gospel will destroy all those warring temperaments that separate men and nations in this present imperfect state. The present is the time for active enterprise and unceasing labor; but the future, for universal joy and praise.

Dear reader, are you a Christian? Then labor for the triumph of universal holiness and consequent happiness. Pray for, labor for, live for, and ardently expect, this long prayed for, and much desired event—THE CONVERSION OF THE WORLD—when the name of the Lord shall be praised by all nations, and the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God.











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